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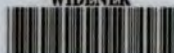
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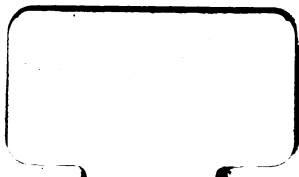
FROM THE FUND

IN MEMORY OF

GEORGE SILSBEE HALE

AND

ELLEN SEVER HALE





STREAMS

FROM

HIDDEN SOURCES.

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STREAMS
FROM
HIDDEN SOURCES.

BY
B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING,

AUTHOR OF 'UTHER' 'FAIR ROSAMOND' ETC.



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FOREWORDS.

FOR THE INTENT of this little book, it is not meant to teach. That I leave to others and wiser.

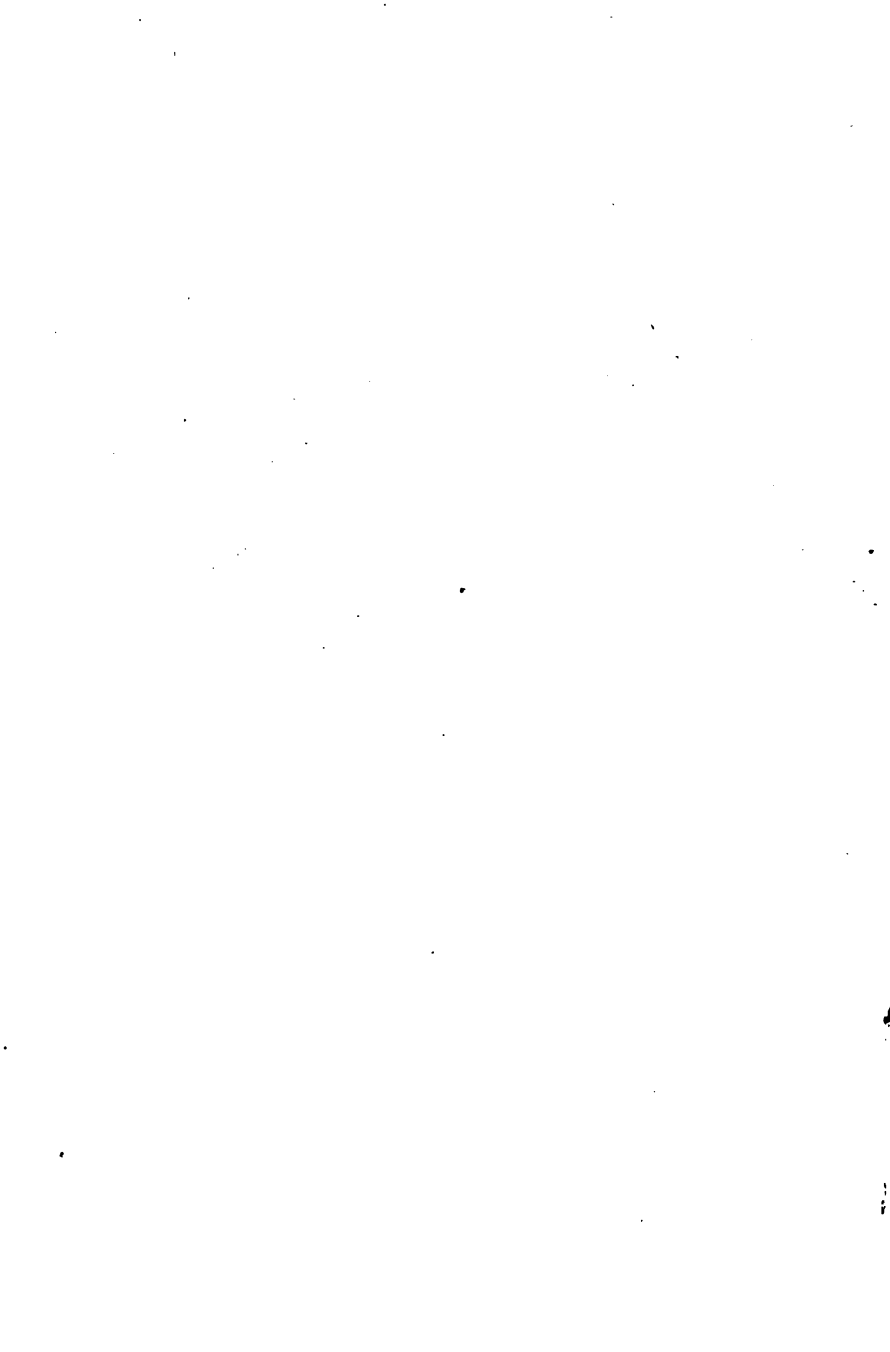
But, forasmuch as, in these our days, there would seem to have grown a desire to drink of the springs at which our fathers slaked their thirst, I have tried to clear from some few the weight, with which they have been covered by careless ages. And, since, in our time, a few of our nobler spirits have thought it good to draw from these hidden sources the draught with which the people must be satisfied, it seems fitting that folk should know the wells from whence their comfort comes. So, out of all old lore, I have chosen seven books, as setting forth seven following stages of time, and from each of these have taken what seemed to me the best thing, so that any man may judge, and if it please him trace the stream to its source.



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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

IT MAY SEEM to the chance reader, that those stray extracts from romance literature which form the more important part of this book have been chosen in a manner somewhat arbitrary. Why, one will say, do we see nothing taken from the many books of foreign chivalry, why has the author neglected 'Amadis of Gaul,' 'Parismus of Bohemia,' and all their kindred literature? Why, another may ask, do we stop at the sixteenth century? Have there been no worthy works since that time?

To which queries I answer, firstly, that I wished to choose only from the best and most typical work of each age; secondly, that there have been *no* worthy works of romance since the sixteenth century.

It is my purpose to show the great mass of

people, who will not or cannot read anything worth reading, what a mistake they make in neglecting the old lore, and how much wiser were our fathers than we are. Probably, their lives, now made glorious to us by reason of the golden glamour which Time has thrown across our gaze back into those ages, were to them as commonplace and as weary as are ours. But they had one thing, which we, in our clever days, seem to lack, they had Wisdom. They never sate down to grumble over the weakness and weariness of their times, they never did as we in our grovelling self-love too commonly do, they did not set up an idol of clay and swear it was the true God! Our present standard of fiction is this: we either take some altogether insignificant person, and bow down before our consumptive governess, or our spotless parson, as the case may be, or we exalt upon a pedestal an utterly impracticable individual with every vice, yet ineffably virtuous. In either case, the end is the same. Vulgarity, hopeless vulgarity! Women and men too, I fear, spend their spare moments in reading of such speeches, and in realising such scenes as clatter and pass around

them in every day of their wretched, earth-bound lives ! But in the olden days it was not so. Then there was Faith at least, so men believed in something better than their own selves, their own being which they felt to be so weak in its actual, so strong in its possible, life, and longed to refresh themselves with the record of imagined Beauty, which is Rest, in the intervals of Labour, which is Ugliness. For toil is ugly of its nature, however it may be beautified by the sanctifying power of Duty. Therefore, they sought for, and found, a rest from their labour in the dwelling on old legends of love, of friendship, and of chivalry, and in their seeking they gained a strength, and they found a peace, which shine in all their work, and after which we, wise folk as we are, labour in vain !

There was a first age, when the faith of Christ had yet to struggle with the love for Venus : of that age 'Cupid and Psyche' may tell. Anon, the Christian faith was all in all to men : let 'St. Eustace' speak. Human nature trampled down the more ardent belief, and 'Alexander and Lodo-wick' stand out as perfect samples of what human-kind may be, independent of, or connected with,

religion. Of the same type, with a revulsion in favour of the faith, is 'Fulgencius.' Then comes the full belief in man, as a man, and we see how Launcelot was loved of Heaven, in spite of all the earth-woven toils that hindered his strong feet from running the race that was set before him. And the days go on, and manhood has bowed down before the sweet presence of woman, and Lorenzo and Isabella are our theme. Last of all, in the end of romance, in the downfall of belief, we come to the 'Marriage of Belphegor,' and now neither manhood is worthy, nor womankind to be worshipped, nor the faith venerable. Then, there is no more to be said. Faith was dead : what need to look for fruit from a withered tree ? Romance was belief in something, possibly better than present existence ; but Faith died many a year ago,—or mayhap she only swooned into a trance, and may be wakened.

STREAMS FROM HIDDEN SOURCES.

CUPID AND PSYCHE.

(From the 'Metamorphosis, or Golden Ass,' of Lucius Apuleius
Madaurensis.)

AMONGST all the books of romance which in the Middle Ages were the delight of our forefathers, there was none more popular than the 'Golden Ass,' or Metamorphosis of Lucius Apuleius, from which the following tale of Cupid and Psyche has been extracted. Indeed, in so great estimation was it held, in common with the philosopher's other works, that Petrarch, in writing to a correspondent, classes the author with such writers as Cicero, Seneca, St. Augustine and others, actually preferring him to the founder of the school of philosophy of which Apuleius was a disciple.

Born towards the end of the first century, of Greek parents, in the town of Madaura in Numidia, and descended on the mother's side from Plutarch, Lucius Apuleius, according to his own account of

himself, was early sent first to Carthage and afterwards to Athens, to study in the schools there ; and after completing his course, finally took up his residence in Rome. Here he undertook the study of Latin, and that language he declares himself to have learned without the aid of a master, which may account for the badness of his style. Notwithstanding, he speedily became eminent as an author and philosopher of the Platonic school, and although many of his writings are undoubtedly lost, it is sufficiently evident from the books extant over what a wide range of subjects his knowledge extended : it is, however, to the immortal romance under consideration, and especially to the portion of it here given, that he chiefly owes the remembrance of his labours.

The story of Cupid and Psyche would alone have sufficed to ensure immortality for the 'Golden Ass.' Among all the early myths of antiquity, there is none to equal in beauty or pathos this the production of a late time. The gods of Olympus were tottering on their thrones, but Love, the eldest of them, seemed to rise up in defiance of new powers, and assert his sway, declaring how in the first days he was united for ever to the human soul, thence made immortal, and fitted by much travail to be his bride, and the origin of joy eternal.

The poets in their many wondrous tales had told nothing of this ; they had not imaged forth the need of Love to expend himself upon some other, nor how the soul alone was found worthy of that entire devotion ; but the philosopher came to supply the missing story to mythology, and to point his tale with its moral, viz. : that only by the entertaining of love can pleasure come to bless the world. Some of the commentators upon Apuleius have regarded the entire romance as an elaborate parable, intended to avert the impending downfall of paganism ; but without altogether accepting such a view of the subject, one must admit the evident intention of allegory in this portion—allegory of a kind naturally congenial to the Platonist.

A particular interest attaches to Psyche herself, inasmuch as she may be taken for the great prototype of all those distressed princesses whose toil and ultimate triumph have for centuries been the favourite theme in Northern folk-lore. So many points of likeness occur between her history and the adventures of our nursery heroines as can hardly result merely from accident. The two cruel sisters, the marvellous enchanted palace, and the lover, whether he be Cupid or fairy prince, are familiar enough ; but there are three incidents, and those three of the most striking, which are literally

reproduced, respectively, in the 'White Cat,' the 'Sleeping Beauty,' and 'Aschenpüttel.' For we all remember how the enchanted princess was ministered to by voices and invisible hands, as was Psyche in her golden house; and when the kiss of the Prince breaks Beauty's slumber, what is this but a repetition of the way in which Love brought succour to the soul? Might not a similarity of hidden meaning be found in both stories?

But the third instance is the strongest; the task set by Venus to her step-daughter is identical with that which was given to the despised Aschenpüttel by her cruel step-mother, and the machinery employed for the deliverance of the ill-used girl is in both cases practically the same, the ants sorting the grain for Psyche, and the fowls of the air aiding her German representative. I must leave it for wiser than I to determine whence comes this likeness, whether from a common Oriental origin, or from a lingering reminiscence of the great Roman people, whose literature no less than their laws may thus have left an impress upon the nations. If it be so, that we have in our popular tales a faint reflex of 'Cupid and Psyche,' it is interesting, as one instance among many, of the extent to which the Greek mind, swaying the conquering Latin race, at last ruled even those who gave that race to

seeming destruction, and stamped its impress upon the art of a ruder and later time.

It would be simply impossible in the present day to reproduce the 'Golden Ass' entire, with any idea of fitting it for general reading. The incidents, and especially that which hastens the catastrophe, are some of them of indescribable grossness, and in Adlington's translation, which I follow, are related in language which is as plain as could well be. From the nature of the book, it could not be published in an expurgated form without an utter disjointing of the story, and the loss of some of its most striking incidents. But for those who are not to be scared away from a pleasant pasture by the presence in it of ill weeds, there must ever remain an unfailing source of delight in the old romance of Apuleius. Perhaps it may be well, shortly, to epitomise the story. Thus, then, it runs.

The author travelling into Thessaly, the land of witchcraft, falls in with certain fellow-travellers, who tell him of the many sorceries which vex the folk, and specially of the evil doings of witches in Hypata, a city hard by. This part of the book contains a weird and awful tale of the murder and seeming resuscitation of a traveller by witches, which is hardly to be matched in all annals of superstition. Travelling to the very town in question, Apuleius,

after many adventures, becomes enamoured of the maid who waits upon his hostess, a very Canidia, and makes interest with her in a moment of curiosity to obtain for him the ointment by use of which he may assume the shape of a bird. But she, mistaking her mistress's drugs, gives him one which converts him instead into an ass, and in this pitiable state he learns that his only cure is the eating of roses.

Therefore, he starts in search of the remedy, but being perpetually hindered from the carrying out of his design, is bandied about from one master to another, and ever passing from bad estate to worse, is released at length only by divine interposition. It is when the ass has become subject to a band of thieves, that he hears from the lips of a hag who keeps their cave the story of Cupid and Psyche, told to distract the mind of a sorrowing maiden who has been carried off by the bandits, and whose story, with that of her lover Lepolemus, is one of the best and most pathetic in all the book. This narrative occupies the greater part of the fourth, fifth, and sixth books of the 'Golden Ass.' Towards the end, the romance loses in interest, especially after the regaining by the hero of his human form.

The first rendering of Apuleius into English was

not until the year 1566, but the book must have taken a very speedy hold upon the public fancy. For shortly after 1579 we find Stephen Gosson, a precursor of Prynne and Jeremy Collier, stigmatising the 'Golden Asse' amongst the books which he mentions as having 'been thoroughly ransackt to furnish the Playhouses.' There seems no evidence, however, of any greater foundation for this sweeping statement than the fact, for which he vouches, of a play on the subject of 'Cupid and Psyche' having been 'played at Paules,' and probably no other portion of the book was dramatised. The date of this censure cannot be fixed with exactness, but the book in which it occurs, 'Plays confuted,' was written in answer to an apology for the drama by Thomas Lodge, the poet, which was published in 1579 as a sort of antidote to Gosson's former work on the same topic, 'The School of Abuse.'

This first edition of 1566, translated by William Adlington, was in quarto, a form in which it was reprinted in the years 1571, 1596, 1600, and 1639. In 1582 an octavo edition of the same version appeared; this has through some cause become extremely rare; the only copy I have seen is in a mutilated condition, but has fortunately the story of Cupid and Psyche intact. Adlington's

translation remains the best in existence, but new versions have been more than once attempted. For instance, in 1744, John Lockman, a translator of M. de la Fontaine's adaptation of the story, prefixed to his work a rendering of the original. In 1795 the same fragment was published in octavo, translated by Thomas Taylor, who followed it up in 1822 with a version of the entire romance. The latest edition of the works of Apuleius was that published in 1853 by Mr. Bohn.

Of the poetical treatment of the myth, the first instance in our own country (apart from that lost play cited above) would seem to be one in 1666 by an unnamed author, entitled 'Cupid's Courtship, or the Celebration of a marriage between the God of love and Psiche.' This is cited by Mr. Hazlitt, but I have not been able to obtain sight of a copy. In 1799 this was followed by a now-forgotten poem by Mr. Hudson Gurney. Mrs. Henry Tighe, in the year 1805, produced a poem on the same subject, which went through two later editions, and is still constantly to be met with upon bookstalls. This, as well as Mr. Gurney's poem, are affixed to Bohn's edition, already mentioned. But it was reserved for our own times to give a worthy rendering of the story.

Mr. William Morris, in the second volume of

his 'Earthly Paradise,' opens with a poem of 'Cupid and Psyche,' which alone would have stamped him as a poet of no mean rank, and which will probably live, in common with the 'Death of Paris,' and the still nobler 'Defence of Guinevere,' long after people have forgotten or ceased to read others of his works. The latest effort was a poem entitled 'Venus and Psyche,' published in 1871 by a Mr. Crawley, a gentleman who appears to have wanted the first requisites for such a task as he had undertaken ; it ranks no higher than second-rate burlesque. Of the early artistic conception of the two principal actors in the story, we have left to us striking examples in two mutilated but wonderfully beautiful sculptures, the Eros of the British Museum, which has been attributed to Praxiteles, and the Psyche of the Neapolitan Museum, which latter, though a mere fragment, is a perfect example of the best Græco-Roman art. The Eros, as it is now called, though wanting head and arms, is as beautiful as only the god of love could be ; its proportions are worth studying as a model of symmetry, especially the long slender legs and thin flanks. Psyche is well known, by means of casts of the right side and the sweet face, which are all that remain to us of the statue.

Pictorial treatment of the myth begins with those frescoes, thirty-two in number, adorning the corridor of the Villa Farnesina, which Raffaelle painted for his patron, Agostino Chigi, of which series No. 31, 'Psyche's Marriage,' contests the palm with the same painter's 'Triumph of Galatea,' as being his greatest production. These are well known from the engravings of Marc Antonio. In the gallery of the Louvre, again, is a well-known picture by Gérard, of Cupid kissing Psyche, which, however defective in colour, must always be a favourite with lovers of art, on account of its drawing and exquisite feeling. To come down to more modern times, it is but a few years since there were exhibited, at the Gallery of the Old Water Colour Society, two pictures and a sketch from the same story by one of our greatest living painters, Mr. E. Burne Jones, which no one who saw them can ever forget. In the paintings the marvellous colour, and in all three the delicacy of conception and treatment, were such as can only cause deeper regret at the scarcity of work from the hand of such a master. The two former represented the first meeting of the lovers and the awakening of Psyche; the sketch was of Psyche borne down to her palace by Zephyrus.

Doubtless many others, both painters and sculp-

tors, have resorted to the 'Golden Ass' for their subjects; but it would be as tedious as unprofitable to insist minutely upon any works but such as may claim to stand in the first rank of art. Mention may, however, be made of a picture by Elzheimer, in the gallery of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.

With respect to foreign treatment of this particular story, it is sufficient to cite the Italian version of Marino and the French of La Fontaine, with the play on the subject which was written by Molière, Corneille, and Quinault, and for which Jean Baptiste de Lully composed incidental music.

The version given below is the result of a collation of the quarto and octavo editions of the sixteenth century translation.

*THE MOST PLEASANT AND DELECTABLE
TALE OF THE MARRIAGE OF CUPID AND
PSYCHE.*

THERE was sometime a certain king, inhabiting in the West parts, having to wife a noble dame, by whom he had three daughters exceeding fair: of whom the two elder were of such comely shape and beauty, as they excelled all other women living, so as they merited the praise and commendation of every person, and deservedly to be preferred above the residue of the common sort; yet the singular passing beauty and maiden majesty of the youngest daughter so far surmounted them two, as no earthly creature could sufficiently express or set out the same; by reason whereof, after the fame of this excellent maiden was spread abroad in every part of the city, the citizens and strangers there, being inwardly pricked by the zealous affection to behold her famous person, came daily by thousands, hundreds, and scores to her father's palace, and astonished with admiration of her incomparable beauty did

no less worship and reverence her, with crosses, signs, and tokens, and other divine adorations, according to the custom of the old used rites and ceremonies, than if she were Lady Venus indeed.

Shortly after, the fame spread into the next cities and bordering regions that the goddess whom the deep seas had borne and brought forth, and the froth of the spurning waves had nourished, to the intent to show her magnificence and divine power in earth to such as erst did honour and worship her, was now conversant amongst mortal men; or else that the earth and not the seas, by a new concourse and influence of the celestial planets, had budded and yielded forth a new Venus endued with the flower of virginity: so daily more and more increased this opinion, and now is her flying fame dispersed into the next island, and well nigh into every part and province of the whole world.

Whereupon innumerable strangers resorted from far countries, adventuring themselves by long journeys on land, and by great perils on water, to behold this glorious virgin. By occasion whereof such a contempt grew towards the goddess Venus, that no person travelled unto the town Paphos, nor to the isle Gyndos, no, nor to Cythera to worship her. Her ornaments were thrown out, her

temples defaced, her pillows and cushions torn, her ceremonies neglected, her images and statues uncrowned, and her bare altars unswept and foul with the ashes of old burned sacrifice: for why, every person honoured and worshipped this maid instead of Venus. And in the morning, at her first coming abroad, offered unto her oblations, provided banquets, called her by the name of Venus, which was not Venus indeed, and in her honour presented flowers and garlands in most reverent fashion. This sudden alteration of celestial honour greatly inflamed the love of very Venus, who, unable to temper herself from indignation, shaking her head in raging sort, reasoned with herself in this manner:

Behold the original parent of all these elements, behold the Lady Venus renowned throughout all the world, with whom a mortal maiden is joined now partaker of honour; my name, registered in the city of heaven, is profaned and made vile by terrene absurdities: if I shall suffer any mortal creature to present my majesty in earth, or that any shall bear about a false-surmised shape of my person, then in vain did Paris that shepherd, in whose just judgment and confidence the great Jupiter had affianced, prefer me above the residue of the goddesses for the excellency of my beauty. But she, whatsoever

she be, that hath usurped mine honour, shall shortly repent her of her unlawful estate !

And by and by she called her winged son Cupid, rash enough and hardy, who, by his evil manners contemning all public justice and laws, armed with fire and arrows, running up and down in the nights from house to house and corrupting the lawful marriages of every person, doth nothing but that which is evil ; who, although he were of his own proper nature sufficient prone to work mischief, yet she egged him forward with words, and brought him to the city and showed him *Psyche*, for so the maid was called, and having told the cause of her anger, not without great rage,

I pray thee, quoth she, my dear child, by the motherly bond of love, by the sweet wounds of thy piercing darts, by the pleasant heat of thy fire, revenge the injury which is done to thy mother by the false and disobedient beauty of a mortal maiden ; and I pray thee without delay that she may fall in love with the most miserable creature living, the most poor, the most crooked, and the most vile, that there may be none found in all the world of like wretchedness.

When she had spoken these words she embraced and kissed her son, and took her voyage towards the sea. When she came upon the sea, she began

to call the gods and goddesses, who were obedient at her voice. For incontinent came the daughters of Nereus singing with tunes melodiously, Portunus with his bristled and rough beard, Salita with her bosom full of fish, Palemon the driver of the dolphin, the trumpeters of Triton, leaping hither and thither and blowing with heavenly noise; such was the company that followed Venus, marching towards the ocean sea.

In the mean season, Psyche with all her beauty received no fruit of honour. She was wondered at of all, she was praised of all, but she perceived that no king, nor prince, nor any of the superior sort did repair to woo her. Every one marvelled at her divine beauty, as it were some image well painted and set out. Her other two sisters which were nothing so greatly exalted by the people were royally married to two kings, but the virgin Psyche sitting at home alone, lamenting her solitary life, and being disquieted both in mind and body, although she pleased all the world yet hated she herself her own beauty. Whereupon the miserable father of this unfortunate daughter, suspecting that the gods and powers of heaven did envy her estate, went unto the town called Milete to receive the oracle of Apollo, where he made his prayers and offered sacrifice, and desired a husband for his

daughter : but Apollo, though he were a Grecian and of the country of Ionia, because of the foundation of Milete, yet he gave answer in Latin verse, the sense whereof was this :

Let Psyche's corpse be clad in mourning weed,
And set on rock of yonder hill aloft :
Her husband is no wight of human seed,
But serpent dire and fierce as may be thought,
Who flies with wings above in starry skies
And doth subdue each thing with fiery flight ;
The gods themselves, and powers that seem so wise,
With mighty Jove, be subject to his might,
The rivers black, and deadly floods of pain,
And darkness eke, as thrall to him remain.

The king sometime happy, when he heard the prophecy of Apollo returned home sad and sorrowful, and declared to his wife the miserable and unhappy fate of his daughter ; then they began to lament and weep, and passed over many days in great sorrow. But now the time approached of Psyche's marriage ; preparation was made, black torches were lighted, the pleasant songs were turned into pitiful cries, the melody of Hymeneus was ended with deadly howling, the maiden that should be married did wipe her eyes with her veil : all the family and people of the city weeped likewise, and with great lamentation was ordained a remiss time for that day, but necessity compelled that Psyche should be brought to her appointed

place, according to the divine commandment. And when the solemnity was ended they went to bring this sorrowful spouse, not to her marriage, but to her final end and burial. And while the father and mother of Psyche did go forward weeping and crying, to do this enterprise, Psyche spake unto them in this sort :

Why torment you your unhappy age with continual dolour ? Why trouble you your spirits, which are more rather mine than yours ? Why soil ye your faces with tears, which I ought to adore and worship ? Why tear you my eyes in yours ? Why pull you your hoar hairs, why knock ye your breasts for me ? Now you see the reward of my excellent beauty ! Now, now you perceive, but too late, the plague of envy ! When the people did honour me and call me new Venus, then you should have wept, then you should have sorrowed as though I had been dead : for now I see and perceive that I am come to this misery by the only name of Venus. Bring me, and, as fortune hath appointed, place me on the top of the rock ; I greatly desire to end my marriage, I greatly covet to see my husband, why do I delay ? Why should I refuse him that is appointed to destroy all the world ?

Thus ended she her words, and thrust herself amongst the people that followed ; then they

brought her to the appointed rock of the high hill and set her thereon, and so departed. The torches and lights were put out by the tears of the people, and every man going home, the miserable parents, well-nigh consumed with sorrow, gave themselves to everlasting darkness.

Thus poor Psyche, being left alone weeping and trembling on the top of the rock, was blown by the gentle air and of shrilling Zephyrus, and carried from the hill with a meek wind, which retained her garments up, and by little and little brought her down into a deep valley, where she was laid in a bed of most sweet and fragrant flowers. Thus fair Psyche, being sweetly couched among the soft and tender herbs, as in a bed of sweet and fragrant flowers, and having qualified the troubles and thoughts of her restless mind, was now well reposed. And when she had refreshed herself sufficiently with sleep, she rose with a more quiet and pacified mind, and fortunèd to espy a pleasant wood environed with great and mighty trees; she espied likewise a running river as clear as crystal.

In the midst of the wood, well-nigh at the fall of the river, was a princely edifice, wrought and builded, not by the art or hand of man, but by the mighty power of God, and you would judge, at the first entry therein, that it were some

pleasant and worthy mansion for the powers of heaven. For the embowings above were of cedarn and ivory, propped and undermined with pillars of gold, and walls covered and ceiled with silver : divers sorts of beasts were graven and carved, that seemed to encounter with such as entered in ; all things were so curiously and finely wrought that it seemed either to be the work of some demigod, or God himself. The pavement was all of precious stone, divided and cut one from another, whereon was carved divers kinds of pictures, in such sort that blessed and thrice blessed were they which might go upon such a pavement. Every part and angle of the house was so well adorned, that, by reason of the precious stones and inestimable treasure there, it glittered and shone in such sort that the chambers, porches, and doors gave light as it had been the sun. Neither otherwise did the other treasure of the house disagree unto so great a majesty, that verily it seemed in every point a heavenly palace fabricated and builded for Jupiter himself.

Then Psyche, moved with delectation, approached nigh, and taking a bold heart entered into the house, and beheld everything there with great affection ; she saw storehouses wrought exceeding fine, and replenished with abundance of riches ;

finally, there could nothing be devised which lacked there, but amongst such great store of treasure this was most marvellous, that there was no closure, bolt, nor lock to keep the same. And when with great pleasure she viewed all these things she heard a voice without any body that said,

Why do you marvel, Madam, at so great riches ? Behold all that you see is at your commandment ; wherefore, go you into the chamber and repose yourself upon the bed, and desire what bath you will have, and we, whose voices you hear, be your servants, and ready to minister unto you according to your desire ; in the mean season, royal meats and dainty dishes shall be prepared for you.

Then Psyche perceived the felicity of divine providence, and, according to the advertisements of the incorporeal voices, she first reposed herself upon the bed, and then refreshed her body in the baths. This done, she saw the table garnished with meats, and a chair to sit down. When Psyche was set down, all sorts of divine meats and wines were brought in, not by anybody, but as it were with a wind, for she could see no person before her, but only hear voices on every side. After that all the services were brought to the table, one came in and sung invisibly, another played on the harp, but she saw no man ; the harmony of the instruments did

so greatly shrill in her ears, that, although there were no manner of person, yet seemed she in the midst of a multitude of people.

All these pleasures finished, when night approached Psyche went to bed, and when she was laid that the sweet sleep came upon her, she greatly feared . . . because she was alone : then came her unknown husband, and . . . rose in the morning before day and departed. Soon after came her invisible servants, presenting to her such things as were necessary for her ; and thus she passed forth a great while, and, as it happened, the novelty of things by continual custom did increase her pleasure, but specially the sound of the instruments was a comfort to her being alone.

During the time that Psyche was in this place of pleasure, her father and mother did nothing but weep and lament, and her two sisters, hearing of her most miserable fortune, came with great dolour and sorrow to comfort and speak with their parents. The night following, Psyche's husband spake unto her, for she might feel his eyes, his hands, and his ears, and said :

Oh my sweet spouse and dear wife, fortune doth menace unto thee imminent peril and danger, whereof I wish thee gently to beware. For know thou that thy sisters, thinking that thou art dead, be greatly

troubled, and are come to the mountain by thy steps ; whose lamentations if thou fortune to hear, beware that thou do in no wise make answer or look up towards them, for if thou do, thou shalt purchase to me great sorrow, and to thyself utter destruction.

Psyche, hearing her husband, was contented to do all things as he commanded. After that he was departed and the night passed away, Psyche lamented and cried all the day following, thinking that now she was past all hope of comfort, in that she was closed within the walls of a prison, deprived of human conversation, and commanded not to aid her sorrowful sisters, no, nor once to see them. Thus she passed all the day in weeping, and went to bed at night without any refection of meat or bath. Incontinently after came her husband, who, when he had embraced her sweetly, gan say,

Is it thus that you perform your promise, my sweet wife? What do I find here? Pass you all the day and the night in weeping? And will you not cease in your husband's arms? Go to, do what ye will, purchase your own destruction, and when you find it so, remember my words and repent, but too late!

Then she desired her husband more and more, assuring him that she should die unless he would grant that she might see her sisters, whereby she might speak with them and comfort them ; whereat

at length he was contented, and moreover he willed that she should give them as much gold and jewels as she would, but he gave her a further charge saying,

Beware that you covet not, being moved by the pernicious counsel of your sisters, to see the shape of my person, lest by your curiosity you be deprived of so good and worthy estate.

Psyche, being glad herewith, rendered unto him most entire thanks, and said,

O sweet husband, I had rather die than to be separated from you, for, whosoever you be, I love and retain you within my heart as if you were mine own spirit or Cupid himself: but I pray you grant this likewise, that you would command your servant Zephyrus to bring my sisters down into the valley as he brought me.

Wherewithal she kissed him sweetly, and desired him gently to grant her request, calling him her spouse, her sweetheart, her joy and her solace, whereby she enforced him to agree to her mind, and when morning came he departed away.

After long search made, the sisters of Psyche came to the hill where she was set on the rock, crying with a loud voice in such sort that the stones answered again. When they called their sister by

her name that their cries came to her ears, she came forth, and said,

Behold, here is she for whom you weep ; I pray you torment yourselves no more, cease your weeping !

And by and bye she commanded Zephyrus by the appointment of her husband to bring them down, neither did he delay, for with gentle blasts he retained them up, and laid them softly in the valley. I am not able to express the often embracing, kissing, and greeting that was between them three ; all sorrows and tears were then laid apart.

Come in, quoth Psyche, into our house, and refresh your afflicted minds with your sister.

Then she showed them the storehouses of treasure, she caused them to hear the voices which served her, the bath was ready, the meats were brought in, and when they had filled themselves with divine delicacies they conceived great envy within their hearts, and one of them, being very curious, demanded what her husband was, of what estate, and who was lord of so precious a house. But Psyche, remembering the promise she made to her husband, fained that he was a young man of comely stature, with a flaxen beard, and had great delight in hunting in the hills and dales by. And lest by her long talk she should be found to trip or fail in her words, she filled their laps with gold,

silver, and jewels, and commanded Zephyrus to carry them away. When they were brought up to the mountain, they went home to their own houses, and murmured with envy that they bare against Psyche, saying,

Behold cruel and contrary fortune ! Behold how we, born all of one parent, have divers destinies ; but specially we that are the elder two be married to strange husbands, made as handmaidens, and, as it were, banished from our country and friends, whereas our younger sister hath so great abundance of treasure, and gotten a god to her husband, who hath no skill to use so great plenty of riches. Saw you not, sister, what was in the house ? What great store of jewels, what glittering robes, what gems, what gold we trod upon ? That, if she have a husband according as she affirmeth, there is none that liveth this day happier in all the world than she ; and so it may come to pass that at length, for the great affection and love which he may bear to her, he may make her a goddess, for, by Hercules, such was her countenance, so she behaved herself, that, as a goddess, she had voices to serve her, and the winds obey her. But I, poor wretch, have first married a husband older than my father, more bald than a coot, more weak than a child, and that locketh me up all day in the house !

Then said the other sister,

I am married to a husband that hath the gout, twofold, crooked, not courageous in paying my debt ; I am fain to rub and mollify his fingers with divers sorts of oils, and to wrap them in plasters and salves, so that I soil my white and dainty hands with the corruption of filthy clouts, not using myself like a wife but more like a servant. And you, my sister, seem likewise to be in bondage, wherefore I cannot abide to see our younger sister in such great felicity ; saw you not, I pray you, how proudly and arrogantly she handled us even now, and how, in vaunting herself, she uttered her presumptuous mind ? How she cast a little gold into our laps, and, being weary of our company, commanded we should be borne and blown away ? Verily I live not, nor am a woman, but I will deprive her of all her bliss ; and if you, my sister, be so far bent as I, let us consult together and not utter our mind to any person, no, nor yet to our parents, nor tell that ever we saw her, for it sufficeth that we have seen her, whom it repenteth to have seen ; neither let us declare her good fortune to our father nor to any other, since as they seem not happy whose riches are unknown, so shall she know she hath sisters, no abjects, but more worthy than she. Now let us go home to our husbands and

poor houses, and when we are better instructed let us return to suppress her pride.

So this evil counsel pleased these two evil women, and they hid the treasure which Psyche gave them, and tare their hair, renewing their false and forged tears. When their father and mother beheld them weep and lament still, they doubled their sorrows and griefs ; but full of ire and forced with envy they took their voyage homeward, devising the slaughter and destruction of their sister. In the mean season, the husband of Psyche did warn her again in the night with these words :

Seest thou not, quoth he, what peril and danger evil fortune doth threaten unto thee? Whereof if thou take not good heed it will shortly come upon thee : for the unfaithful harlots do greatly endeavour to set their snares to catch thee, and their purpose is to make and persuade thee to behold my face, which if thou once fortune to see, as I have often told, thou shalt see no more. Wherefore if these naughty hags, armed with wicked minds, do chance to come again, as I think no otherwise but that they will, take heed that thou talk not with them, but simply suffer them to speak what they will : howbeit if thou canst not refrain thyself, beware that thou have no communication of thy husband, nor answer a word if they fortune to question of me ; so will we increase our

stock, and this young and tender child . . . if thou conceal my secrets, shall be made an immortal God, otherwise a mortal creature.

Then Psyche was very glad that she should bring forth a divine babe, and very joyful in that she should be honoured as a mother. She reckoned and numbered carefully the days and months that passed. . . . But those pestilent and wicked furies, breathing out their serpentine poison, took shipping to bring their enterprise to pass. Then Psyche was warned again by her husband in this sort :

Behold the last day, the extreme case, and the enemies of thy blood have armed themselves against us, pitched their camps, set their host in array, and are marching towards us ; for now thy two sisters have drawn their swords, and are ready to slay thee. Oh with what force are we assailed this day ! Oh, sweet Psyche ! I pray thee to take pity on thyself, of me, and deliver thy husband and this infant . . . from so great danger, and see not, neither hear these cursed women, which are not worthy to be called thy sisters for their great hatred and breach of sisterly amity ; for they will come, like sirens, to the mountain, and yield out their piteous and lamentable cries.

When Psyche had heard these words, she sighed sorrowfully, and said,

Oh, dear husband, this long time have you had trial and experience of my faith, and doubt you not but that I will persevere in the same; wherefore, command your wind Zephyrus that he may do as he hath done before, to the intent that where you have charged me not to behold your venerable face, yet that I may comfort myself with the sight of my sisters. I pray you by these beautiful hairs, by these round cheeks, delicate and tender, by your pleasant hot breasts, whose shape and face I shall learn at length by the child . . ., grant the fruit of my desire, refresh your dear spouse Psyche with joy, who is bound and linked unto you for ever! I little esteem to see your visage and figure, little do I regard the night and darkness thereof, for you are my only light!

Her husband being as it were enchanted with these words, and compelled by violence of her often embracing, wiping away her tears with his hair, did yield unto his wife, and when morning came departed as he was accustomed to do.

Now her sisters arrived on land, and never rested till they came to the rock, without visiting of their father and mother, and leaped down rashly from the hill themselves. Then Zephyrus, according to the divine commandment, brought them down, though it were against his will, and laid them in

the valley without any harm. By and bye they went into the palace to their sister, without leave, and when they had eftsoons embraced their prey, and thanked her with flattering words for the treasure which she gave them, they said :

Oh, dear sister Psyche ! know you that you are now no more a child, but a mother ? Oh, what great joy bear you unto us . . . ! What a comfort will it be unto all the house ! How happy shall we be that shall see this infant nourished amongst so great plenty of treasure, that if he be like his parents, as it is necessary he should, there is no doubt but a new Cupid shall be born !

By this kind of means they went about to win Psyche by little and little, but, because they were weary with travel, they sate them down in chairs, and after that they had washed their bodies in baths they went into a parlour, where all kinds of meats were ready prepared. Psyche commanded one to play with his harp—it was done ; then immediately other sang, other tuned their instruments, but no person was seen ; by whose sweet harmony and modulation the sisters of Psyche were greatly delighted. Howbeit, the wickedness of these cursed women was nothing suppressed by the sweet noise of these instruments, but they settled themselves to work their treason against Psyche, de-

manding who was her husband, and of what parentage. Then she, having forgotten by too much simplicity that which she had spoken before of her husband, invented a new answer, and said that her husband was of a great province, a merchant, and a man of a middle age, having his beard interspersed with grey hairs. Which when she had spoken, because she would have no further talk, she filled their laps full of gold and silver, and bid Zephyrus to bear them away. In their return homeward they murmured with themselves, saying :

How say you, sister, to so apparent a lie of Psyche's? For first she said, that her husband was a young man of flourishing years and had a flaxen beard, and now she saith that it is half grey with age; what is he that in so short a space can become so old? You shall find it no otherwise, but that either this cursed quean hath invented a great lie, or else that she never saw the shape of her husband. And if it be so that she never saw him, then verily she is married to some god . . . ; but if it be a divine babe and fortune to come to the ears of my mother, as God forbid it should, then may I go and hang myself; wherefore let us go to our parents, and with forged lies let us colour the matter.

After they were thus inflamed and had visited their parents, they returned again to the mountain,

and by the aid of the wind Zephyrus were carried down into the valley, and after they had strained their eyelids to force themselves to weep, they called unto Psyche in this sort :

Thou, ignorant of so great evil, thinkest thyself sure and happy, and sittest at home nothing regarding thy peril, whereas we go about thy affairs and are careful lest any harm should happen unto thee ; for we are credibly informed, neither can we but utter it unto thee, that there is a great serpent, full of deadly poison, with a ravenous and gaping throat, that lieth with thee every night. Remember the oracle of Apollo, who pronounced that thou shouldst be married to a dry and fierce serpent ; and many of the inhabitants hereby, and such as hunt about in the country, affirm that they saw him yesternight, returning from pasture and swimming over the river, whereby they do undoubtedly say, that he will not pamper thee long with delicate meats, but when the time of deliverance shall approach he will devour both thee and the child. Wherefore advise thyself, whether thou wilt agree unto us that are careful for thy safety, and so avoid the peril of death, and be contented to live with thy sisters, or whether thou wilt remain with the serpent and in the end be swallowed into the gulf of his body. And if it be so, that thy solitary life, thy conversation with voices, this servile and dangerous

pleasure, and the love of the serpent do more delight thee, say not but that we have played the parts of natural sisters in warning thee.

Then the poor and simple miser Psyche was moved with the fear of so dreadful words, and, being amazed in her mind, did clean forget the admonitions of her husband, and her own promises made unto him, and, throwing herself headlong into extreme misery, with a wan and sallow countenance scanty uttering a third word, at the length gan say in this sort :

Oh my most dear sisters, I heartily thank you for your great kindness towards me, and I am now verily persuaded that they which have informed you hereof have informed you of nothing but truth ; for I never saw the shape of my husband, neither knew I from whence he came, only I hear his voice in the night. Insomuch that I have an uncertain husband, and one that loveth not the light of the day, which causeth me to suspect that he is a beast as you affirm : moreover I greatly fear to see him, for he doth menace and threaten great evil to me if I should go about to spy and behold his shape ; wherefore, my loving sisters, if you have any remedy for your sister in danger, give it now presently.

Then they, opening the gates of their subtle minds, did put away all privy guile, and egged her

forward in her fearful thoughts, persuading her to do as they would have her; whereupon one of them began and said,

Because that we little esteem any peril or danger to save your life, we intend to show you the best way and mean as we may possibly do. Take a sharp razor and put it under the pillow of your bed, and see that you have ready a privy burning lamp with oil hid under some part of the hanging of the chamber, and, finely dissimuling the matter, when, according to his custom, he cometh to bed and sleepeth soundly, arise you secretly, and with your bare feet go and take your lamp with the razor in your right hand, and with valiant force cut off the head of the poisoned serpent, wherein we will aid and assist you, and when by the death of him you shall be made safe, we will marry you to some comely man.

After they had thus inflamed the heart of their sister, fearing lest some danger might happen unto them by reason of their evil counsel, they were carried by the wind Zephyrus to the top of the mountain, and so they ran away and took shipping.

When Psyche was left alone, saving that she seemed not to be alone, being stirred by so many furies, she was in a tossing mind like the waves of the sea, and, although her will was obstinate and resisted to put in execution the counsel of her

sisters, yet she was in doubtful and diverse opinions touching her calamity. Sometimes she would, sometimes she would not, sometime she is bold, sometime she fears, sometime she mistrusteth, sometime she is moved, sometime she hateth the beast, sometime she loveth her husband; but at length night came, when she made preparation for her wicked intent.

Soon after, her husband came, and when he had kissed and embraced her he fell asleep. Then Psyche, somewhat feeble in body and mind, yet moved by cruelty of fate, received boldness, and brought forth the lamp, and took the razor;—so by her audacity she changed her kind. But when she took the lamp and came to the bedside, she saw the most meek and sweetest beast of all beasts, even fair Cupid couched fairly, at whose sight the very lamp increased his light for joy, and the razor turned his edge.

But when Psyche saw so glorious a body, she greatly feared, and amazed in mind, with a pale countenance all trembling, fell on her knees and thought to hide the razor, yea, verily, in her own heart, which she had undoubtedly done, had it not, through fear of so great an enterprise, fallen out of her hand. And when she saw and beheld the beauty of this divine visage, she was well recreated

in her mind ; she saw his hairs of gold, that yielded out a sweet savour ; his neck more white than milk, his purple cheeks ; his hair hanging comely behind and before, the brightness whereof darkened the light of the lamp ; his tender plume feathers dispersed upon his shoulders like shining flowers, and trembling hither and thither ; and his other parts of his body so smooth and so soft, that it repented not Venus to bear such a child : at the bed's feet lay his bow, quiver, and arrows, that be the weapons of so great a god, which when Psyche did curiously behold, and marvelled at the weapons of her husband, took one of the arrows out of the quiver and pricked herself withal, where-with she was so grievously wounded that the blood followed ; and thereby, of her own accord, she added love upon love.

Then more and more broiling in the love of Cupid, she embraced and kissed him a thousand times, fearing the measure of his sleep ; but, alas, while she was in this great joy, where it were for envy, or for desire to touch this amiable body likewise, there fell out a drop of burning oil from the lamp upon the right shoulder of the god. Oh, rash and bold lamp, the vile ministry of love ! How durst thou be so bold as to burn the god of all fire ? When as he invented thee, to the intent

that all lovers might with more joy pass the nights in pleasure.

The god being burned in this sort, and perceiving that promise was broken, fled away, without utterance of any word, from the eyes and hands of his most unhappy wife. But Psyche fortun'd to catch him, as he was rising, by the right thigh, and held him fast as he flew above in the air, till such time as, constrained by weariness, she let go and fell down upon the ground. But Cupid followed her down, and lighted upon the top of a cypress tree, and angrily spake unto her in this manner :

Oh simple Psyche ! consider with thyself how I, little regarding the commandment of my mother, that willed me that thou shouldest be married to a man of base and miserable condition, came myself from heaven to love thee, wounding my own body with my proper weapons to have thee to my spouse ; and seemed I a beast unto thee, that thou shouldest go about to cut off my head with a razor, who loved thee so well ? Did not I always give thee in charge ? Did not I gently will thee to beware ? But those cursed aiders and counsellors of thine shall be well requited for their pains. As for thee, thou shalt be sufficiently punished by my absence !

Having spoken these words he took his flight into the air. Then Psyche fell flat on the ground,

and as long as she might see her husband, she cast her eyes after him into the air, weeping and lamenting piteously ; but when he was gone out of her sight, she threw herself into the next running river, for the great anguish she was in for the lack of her husband : howbeit the water would not suffer her to be drowned, but took pity upon her in the honour of Cupid, which accustomed to broil and burn the river, and so threw her upon the bank amongst the herbs. Then Pan, the rustical god sitting on the river side, embracing and teaching the goddess Canna to tune her songs and pipes, by whom were feeding the young and tender goats, after that he perceived Psyche in sorrowful case, not ignorant, I know not by what means, of her miserable estate, endeavoured to pacify her in this sort :

Oh fair maid ! I am a rustic and rude herdsman, howbeit, by reason of my old age, expert in many things ; for as far as I can learn by conjecture, which, according as wise men do term, is called divination, I perceive by your uncertain gait, your pale hue, your sobbing sighs, and your watery eyes, that you are greatly in love. Wherefore hearken to me, and go not about to slay yourself, nor weep not at all, but rather adore and worship the great god

Cupid, and win him unto you by your gentle promise of service.

When the god of shepherds had spoken these words, she gave no answer, but made reverence to him as to a god, and so departed.

After Psyche had gone a little way, she fortun'd unaware to come to a city where the husband of one of her sisters dwelled; which when Psyche understood, she caus'd that her sister had knowledge of her coming. And so they met together, and, after great embracing and salutation, the sister of Psyche demand'd the cause of her travel thither.

Marry, quoth she, do not you remember the counsel you gave me, whereby you would that I should kill the beast who, under colour of my husband, lay with me every night? You shall understand, that as soon as I brought forth the lamp to see and behold his shape, I perceived he was the son of Venus, even Cupid himself that lay with me. Then I, being stricken with great pleasure, and desirous to embrace him, could not thoroughly assuage my delight, but, alas, by evil chance the boiling oil of the lamp fortun'd to fall on his shoulder, which caus'd him to awake, who, seeing me armed with fire and weapon, gan say, 'How darest thou be so bold to do so great a mischief? Depart from me, and take such things

as thou didst bring, for I will have thy sister,' and named you, 'to my wife, and she shall be placed in thy felicity ;' and by and bye he commanded Zephyrus to carry me away from the bounds of his house.

Psyche had scantily finished her tale, but her sister, pierced with carnal desire and wicked envy, ran home, and feigning to her husband that she had heard word of the death of her parents, took shipping, and came to the mountain. And although there blew a contrary wind, yet being brought in a vain hope she cried,

Oh Cupid, take me, a more worthy wife ! And thou, Zephyrus, bear down thy mistress !

And so cast herself down headlong from the mountain ; but she fell not into the valley neither alive nor dead, for all the members and parts of her body were torn amongst the rocks, whereby she was made a prey unto the birds and wild beasts, as she worthily deserved. Neither was the vengeance of the other delayed ; for Psyche travelling in that country, fortun'd to come to another city where her other sister did dwell, to whom when she had declared all such things as she told to her first sister, she ran likewise unto the rock, and was slain in like sort. Then Psyche travelled about in the country to seek her husband Cupid, but he was gotten into his mother's chamber, and there be-

wailed the sorrowful wound which he caught by the oil of the burning lamp.

The white bird, the gull, that swims on the waves of the water, flew towards the ocean sea, where she found Venus washing and bathing herself ; to whom she declared that her son was burned and in danger of death, and moreover that it was a common bruit in the mouth of every person, who spake evil of all the family of Venus, that her son doth nothing but haunt harlots in the mountain, and she herself lasciviously use to riot on the sea ; whereby they say that they are now become no more gracious, no more pleasant, no more gentle, but uncivil, monstrous, and horrible ; moreover, that marriages are not for any amity, or for love of procreation, but for envy, discord, and debate. This the curious gull did clatter in the ears of Venus, reprehending her son. But Venus began to cry, and said,

What ! Hath my son gotten any love ? I pray thee, gentle bird, that dost serve me so faithfully, tell me what she is, and what is her name that hath troubled my son in such sort ; whether she be any of the nymphs, of the number of the goddesses, of the company of the Muses, or of my mystery of the Graces ?

To whom the bird answered,

Madam, I know not what she is, but this I know, that she is called Psyche.

Then Venus with indignation cried out,

What, is it she, the usurper of my beauty, the vicar of my name? What, did he think that I was a bawd, by whose show he fell acquainted with the maid?

And immediately she departed and went to her chamber, where she found her son wounded as it was told her, whom when she beheld, she cried out in this sort :

Is this an honest thing, is this honourable to thy parents, is this reason, that thou hast violated and broken the commandment of thy mother and sovereign mistress? And, whereas thou shouldst have vexed my enemy with loathsome love, thou hast done contrary, for, being but of tender and unripe years, thou hast with too licentious appetite embraced my most mortal foe, to whom I shall be made a mother and she a daughter ! Thou presumest and thinkest, thou trifling boy, thou varlet and without all reverence, that thou art most worthy and excellent, and that I am not able by reason of mine age to have another son, which if I might have, thou shouldst well understand that I would bear a more worthier than thou ! But to work thee a greater despite, I determine to adopt one of my servants, and to give him these

wings, this fire, this bow, and these arrows, and all other furniture which I gave thee not for this purpose, neither is anything given thee of thy father for this intent: but first thou hast been evil brought up and instructed in thy youth, thou hast thy hands ready, thou hast often offended thy ancients, and especially me that am thy mother; thou hast pierced me with thy darts, thou contemnest me as a widow, neither dost thou regard thy valiant and invincible father, and to anger me more thou art amorous of wenches and harlots; but I will cause that thou shalt shortly repent thee, and that this marriage shall be dearly bought. To what a point am I now driven! What shall I do, whither shall I go, how shall I repress this beast? Shall I ask aid of mine enemy Sobriety, whom I have oft offended to engender thee? Or shall I seek counsel of every poor rustical woman? No, no, yet had I rather die! Howbeit I will not cease my vengeance; to her must I have recourse for help, and to none other; I mean Sobriety, who may correct thee sharply, take away thy quiver, deprive thee of thy arrows, unbend thy bow, quench thy fire, and, which is more, subdue thy body with punishment; and when that I have rased and cut off this thy hair, which I have dressed with mine own hands, and made to glitter like gold, and when I have clipped thy wings which I myself have caused to burgeon,

then shall I think to have sufficiently revenged myself upon thee for the injury which thou hast done !

When she had spoken these words, she departed in a great rage out of her chamber. Immediately, as she was going away, came Juno and Ceres demanding the cause of her anger ; then Venus made answer,

Verily, you are come to comfort my sorrow ; but I pray you with all diligence to seek out one whose name is Psyche, who is a vagabond and runneth about the countries, and, as I think, you are not ignorant of the bruit of my son Cupid, and of his demeanour, which I am ashamed to declare !

Then they, understanding the whole matter, endeavoured to mitigate the ire of Venus in this sort :

What is the cause, Madam, or how hath your son so offended, that you should so greatly accuse his love, and blame him by reason that he is amorous ? And why should you seek the death of her whom he doth fancy ? We most humbly entreat you to pardon his fault, if he have accorded to the mind of any maiden. What, do not you know that he is a young man, or have you forgotten of what years he is ? Doth he seem always unto you to be a child ? You are his mother, and a kind woman, will you continually seek out his dalliance ? Will you blame his luxury ? Will

you bridle his love ? And will you reprehend your own art and delights in him ? What god or man is he, that can endure that you should sow or disperse your seed of love in every place, and to make restraint thereof within your own doors ? Certes, you will be the cause of the suppression of the public places of young dames !

In this sort these goddesses endeavoured to pacify her mind, and to excuse Cupid with all their power, although he were absent, for fear of his darts and shafts of love ; but Venus would in nowise assuage her heat, but, thinking that they did rather trifle and taunt at her injuries, she departed from them, and took her voyage towards the sea in all haste.

In the mean season, Psyche hurled herself hither and thither to seek her husband, the rather because she thought that if he would not be appeased with the sweet flattery of his wife, yet he would take mercy upon her at her servile and continual prayers ; and espying a church on the top of a high hill she said,

What can I tell whether my husband and master be there or no ?

Wherefore she went thitherward, and with great pain and travail, moved by hope, after that she climbed to the top of the mountain, she came to

the temple and went in, whereas, behold, she espied sheaves of corn lying on a heap, blades withered with garlands, and reeds of barley ; moreover she saw hooks, scythes, sickles, and other instruments to reap, but everything lay out of order, and as it were cast in by the hands of labourers. Which when Psyche saw, she gathered up and put everything in order, thinking that she would not despise or condemn the temples of any of the gods, but rather get the favour and benevolence of them all. By and by Ceres came in, and beholding her busy and curious in her chapel, cried out afar off and said,

Oh, Psyche, needful of mercy ! Venus seeketh for thee in every place, to revenge herself, and to punish thee grievously ; but thou hast more mind to be here, and carest for nothing less than for thy safety !

Then Psyche fell on her knees before her, watering her feet with her tears, wiping the ground with her hair, and with great weeping and lamentation desired pardon, saying,

Oh, great and holy goddess ! I pray thee by thy plenteous and liberal right hand, by the joyful ceremonies of the harvest, by the secrets of thy sacrifice, by the flying chariots of thy dragons, by the tillage of the ground of Sicily which thou hast invented, by the marriage of Proserpina, by thy diligent inquisition of thy daughter, and by the other secrets which are

within the temple of Eleusis in the land of Athens, take pity on me thy servant Psyche, and let me hide myself a few days amongst these sheaves of corn, until the ire of so great a goddess be past, or until that I be refreshed of my great labour and travail !

Then answered Ceres,

Verily, Psyche, I am greatly moved by thy prayers and tears, and desire with all my heart to aid thee ; but if I should suffer thee to be hidden here, I should incur the displeasure of my cousin, with whom I have made a treaty of peace and an ancient promise of amity. Wherefore I advise thee to depart hence, and take it not in evil part in that I will not suffer thee to abide and remain here within my temple.

Then Psyche, driven away contrary to her hope, was double afflicted with sorrow, and so she returned back again. And behold, she perceived afar off in a valley a temple standing within a forest, fair and curiously wrought, and minding to overpass no place whither better hope did direct her, and to the intent she would desire pardon of every god, she approached nigh unto the sacred door ; whereas she saw precious riches, and vestments engraven with letters of gold hanging upon branches of trees, and the posts of the temple testifying the name of the goddess Juno, to whom they were dedicate. Then she kneeled down upon her knees, and em-

braced the altar with her hands, and wiping her tears gan pray in this sort :

Oh ! dear spouse and sister of the great god Jupiter, which art adored and worshipped amongst the great temples of Samos, called upon by women with child, worshipped at high Carthage because thou wert brought from heaven by the lion ; the rivers of the flood Inachus do celebrate thee, and know that thou art the wife of the great god, and the goddess of goddesses ; all the east part of the world hath thee in veneration, all the world calleth thee Lucina. I pray thee to be mine advocate in my tribulations, deliver me from the great danger which pursueth me, and save me that am weary with so long labours and sorrow, for I know that it is thou that succourest and helpest such women as are with child and in danger.

Then Juno, hearing the prayers of Psyche, appeared unto her in all her royalty, saying,

Certes, Psyche, I would gladly help thee, but I am ashamed to do anything contrary to the will of my daughter-in-law Venus, whom always I have loved as mine own child ; moreover I shall incur the danger of the law entitled De Servo Corrupto, whereby I am forbidden to retain any servant fugitive, against the will of his master.

Then Psyche, cast off likewise by Juno, as without

all hope of the recovery of her husband, reasoned with herself in this sort,

Now what comfort or remedy is left to my afflictions, when as my prayers will nothing avail with the goddesses? What shall I do, whither shall I go, in what cave or darkness shall I hide myself to avoid the fury of Venus? Why do I not take a good heart, and offer myself with humility unto her, whose anger I have wrought? What do I know whether he whom I seek for be in his mother's house or no?

Thus, being in doubt, poor Psyche prepared herself to her own danger, and devised how she might make her orison and prayer unto Venus.

After that Venus was weary with searching by sea and by land for Psyche, she returned toward heaven, and commanded that one should prepare her chariot, which her husband Vulcanus gave unto her by reason of marriage, so finely wrought that neither gold nor silver could be compared to the brightness thereof. Four white pigeons guided the chariot with great diligence, and when Venus was entered in, a number of sparrows flew chirping about, making sign of joy, and all other kind of birds sang sweetly, foreshowing the coming of the great goddess: the clouds gave place, the heavens opened and received her joyfully, the birds that followed nothing feared the eagles, hawks, or other

ravenous fowl of the air. Incontinently she went unto the royal palace of the god Jupiter, and with a proud and bold petition demanded the service of Mercury in certain of her affairs, whereunto Jupiter consented ; then with much joy she descended from heaven with Mercury, and gave him an earnest charge to put in execution her words, saying,

Oh, my brother born in Arcadia, thou knowest well that I, who am thy sister, did never enterprise to do anything without thy presence ; thou knowest also how long I have sought for a girl and cannot find her, wherefore there resteth nothing else save that thou with thy trumpet do pronounce the reward to such as take her. See thou put in execution my commandment, and declare that whatsoever he be that retaineth her wittingly against my will, shall not defend himself by any mean or excusation.

Which when she had spoken, she delivered unto him a label wherein was contained the name of Psyche and the residue of his publication, which done, she departed away to her lodging.

By and bye, Mercury, not delaying the matter, proclaimed throughout all the world, that whatsoever he were that could tell any tidings of a king's fugitive daughter, the servant of Venus, named Psyche, should bring word to Mercury, and for reward of his pains he should receive seven sweet

kisses of Venus. After that Mercury had pronounced these things, every man was inflamed with desire to search out Psyche.

This proclamation was the cause that put all doubt from Psyche, who was scantily come in sight of the house of Venus but one of her servants called Custom came out, who, spying Psyche, cried with a loud voice, saying,

Oh, wicked harlot as thou art, now at length thou shalt know that thou hast a mistress above thee ! What, dost thou make thyself ignorant, as though thou didst not understand what travail we have taken in searching for thee ? I am glad that thou art come into my hands ; thou art now in the gulf of hell, and shalt abide the pain and punishment of thy great contumacy !

And therewithal she took her by the hair, and brought her in before the presence of the goddess Venus. When Venus espied her, she began to laugh, and, as angry persons accustom to do, she shook her head and scratched her right ear, saying,

Oh goddess, goddess, you are now come at length to visit your mother, or else to see your husband, that is in danger of death by your means ! Be you assured I will handle you like a daughter ! Where be my maidens Sorrow and Sadness ?

To whom, when they came, she delivered Psyche to be cruelly tormented; then they fulfilled the commandment of their mistress, and after they had piteously scourged her with rods and whips they presented her again before Venus. Then she began to laugh again, saying,

Behold she thinketh . . . to move me to pity, and to make me a grandmother to her child! Am not I happy, that in the flourishing time of all mine age shall be called a grandmother, and the son of a vile harlot shall be accounted the nephew of Venus! Howbeit, I am a fool to term him by the name of my son, since as the marriage was made between unequal persons, in the field, without witnesses, and not by the consent of their parents; wherefore the marriage is illegitimate, and the child that shall be born a bastard, if we fortune to suffer thee to live so long till thou be delivered!

When Venus had spoken these words, she leaped upon the face of poor Psyche, and, tearing her apparel, took her by the hair, and dashed her head upon the ground. Then she took a great quantity of wheat, of barley-meal, poppy-seed, peasen, lentils, and beans, and mingled them altogether on a heap, saying,

Thou evil-favoured girl! thou seemest unable to get the grace of thy lover by no other means but only

by diligent and painful service ; wherefore I will prove what thou canst do. See that thou separate all these grains one from another, disposing them orderly in their quality, and let it be done before night.

When she had appointed this task unto Psyche, she departed to a great banquet that was prepared that day. But Psyche went not about to dis sever the grain, as being a thing impossible to be brought to pass, by reason it lay so confusedly scattered, but being astonished at the cruel commandment of Venus, sat still and said nothing. Then the little pismire, the emmet, taking pity of her great difficulty and labour, cursing the cruelty of the wife of Jupiter, and of so evil a mother, ran about hither and thither and called to her all the friends :

Ye quick sons of the ground, the mother of all things, take mercy on this poor maid espoused to Cupid, who is in great danger of her person ; I pray you help her with all diligence !

Incontinently one came after another, dis severing and dividing the grain, and after that they had put each kind of corn in order, they ran away again in all haste. When night came, Venus returned home from the banquet, well tippled with wine, smelling of balm, and crowned with garlands of

roses ; who, when she espied what Psyche had done, gan say,

This is not the labour of thy hands, but rather of his that is amorous of thee !

Then she gave her a morsel of brown bread, and went to sleep. In the mean season, Cupid was closed fast in the most surest chamber of the house, partly because he should not hurt himself with wanton dalliance, and partly because he should not speak with his love ; so these two lovers were divided one from another. When night was passed, Venus called Psyche, and said,

Seest thou yonder forest that extendeth out in length with the river ? There be great sheep shining like gold, and kept by no manner of person. I command thee that thou go thither, and bring me home some of the wool of their fleeces.

Psyche arose willingly, not to do her commandment, but to throw herself headlong into the water to end her sorrow. Then a green reed, inspired by divine inspiration, with a gracious tune and melody gan say,

Oh Psyche ! I pray thee not to trouble or pollute my water by the death of thee ; and yet beware that thou go not towards the terrible sheep of this coast until such time as the heat of the sun be past ; for

when the sun is in his force, then seem they most dreadful and furious, with their sharp horns, their stony foreheads, and their gaping throats, wherewith they arm themselves to the destruction of mankind: but, until they have refreshed themselves in the river thou mayst hide thyself here by me, under this great plane tree, and, as soon as their great fury is past, thou mayst go amongst the thickets and bushes under the woodside and gather the locks of their golden fleeces which thou shalt find hanging upon the briars.

Thus spake the gentle and benign reed, showing a mean to Psyche to save her life, which she bare well in memory, and with all diligence went and gathered up such locks as she found, and put them in her apron, and carried them home to Venus. Howbeit the danger of this second labour did not please her, nor give her sufficient witness of the good service of Psyche, but with a sour resemblance of laughter she said :

Of certain I know that this is not thy fact; but I will prove if thou be of so stout a courage, and singular prudence as thou seemest.

Then Venus spake unto Psyche again, saying,

Seest thou the top of yonder great hill, from whence there runneth down water of black and deadly colour, which nourisheth the floods of Styx and

Cocytus? I charge thee to go thither, and bring me a vessel of that water.

Wherewithal she gave her a bottle of crystal, menacing and threatening her rigorously. Then poor Psyche went in all haste to the top of the mountain, rather to end her life than to fetch any water, and when she was come up to the ridge of the hill, she perceived that it was impossible to bring it to pass. For she saw a great rock gushing out most horrible fountains of waters, which ran down and fell by many stops and passages into the valley beneath: on each side she saw great dragons, stretching out their long and bloody necks, that never slept, but appointed to keep the river there; the waters seemed to themselves likewise saying,

Away, away! What wilt thou do? Fly, fly, or else thou wilt be slain!

Then Psyche, seeing the impossibility of this affair, stood still, as though she were transformed into a stone, and, although she was present in body, yet was she absent in spirit and sense by reason of the great peril which she saw, insomuch that she could not comfort herself with weeping, such was the present danger that she was in. But the royal bird of great Jupiter, the eagle, remembering his old service which he had done,

when as, by the prick of Cupid, he brought up the boy Ganymede to the heavens, to be made the butler of Jupiter, and minding to show the like service in the person of the wife of Cupid, came from the high house of the skies, and said unto Psyche :

O simple woman, without all experience, dost thou think to get or dip up any drop of this dreadful water ? No, no, assure thyself thou art never able to come nigh it, for the gods themselves do greatly fear at the sight thereof. What, have you not heard that it is a custom among men to swear by the puissance of the gods, and the gods do swear by the majesty of the river Styx ? But give me thy bottle !

And suddenly he took it, and filled it with the water of the river, and taking his flight through those cruel and horrible dragons brought it unto Psyche ; who, being very joyful thereof, presented it to Venus, who would not yet be appeased, but menacing more and more, said,

What ! thou seemest unto me a very witch and enchantress, that bringest these things to pass ! Howbeit thou shalt do one thing more. Take this box, and go to hell to Proserpina, and desire her to send me a little of her beauty, as much as will serve me the space of one day, and say that such as I

had is consumed away since my son fell sick ; but return again quickly, for I must dress myself therewithal, and go to the theatre of the gods.

Then poor Psyche perceived the end of all fortune, thinking verily that she should never return, and not without cause, when as she was compelled to go to the gulf and furies of hell. Wherefore, without any further delay, she went up to an high tower to throw herself down headlong, thinking that it was the next and readiest way to hell ; but the tower, as inspired, spake unto her, saying :

Oh poor miser ! Why goest thou about to slay thyself ? Why dost thou rashly yield unto thy last peril and danger ? Know thou that, if thy spirit be once separated from thy body, thou shalt surely go to hell, but never to return again. Wherefore hearken to me ! Lacedæmon, a city of Greece, is not far hence : go thou thither, and enquire for the hill Tenarus, whereas thou shalt find a hole leading to hell, even to the palace of Pluto ; but take heed thou go not with empty hands to that place of darkness, but carry two sops sodden in the flour of barley and honey in thy hands, and two halfpence in thy mouth.

And when thou hast passed a good part of that way, thou shalt see a lame ass carrying of wood,

and a lame fellow driving him, who will desire thee to give him up the sticks that fall down, but pass thou on and do nothing. By and bye thou shalt come unto the river of hell whereas Charon is ferryman, who will first have his fare paid him before he will carry the souls over the river in his boat ; whereby you may see that avarice reigneth amongst the dead, neither Charon nor Pluto will do anything for naught : for if it be a poor man that would pass over, and lacketh money, he shall be compelled to die in his journey before they will show him any relief, wherefore deliver to carrion Charon one of the halfpence which thou bearest for thy passage, and let him receive it out of thy mouth.

And it shall come to pass, as thou sittest in the boat, thou shalt see an old man swimming on the top of the river, holding up his deadly hands and desiring thee to receive him into the bark, but have no regard to his piteous cry : when thou art passed over the flood, thou shalt espy old women spinning, who will desire thee to help them, but beware thou do not consent unto them in any case ; for these and like baits and traps will Venus set to make thee let fall one of thy sops, and think not that the keeping of thy sops is a light matter, for if thou lose one of them thou shalt be assured never to return again to this world.

Then thou shalt see a great and marvellous dog with three heads, barking continually at the souls of such as enter in, by reason he can do them no other harm ; he lieth day and night before the gate of Proserpina, and keepeth the house of Pluto with great diligence, to whom if thou cast one of thy sops, thou mayst have access to Proserpina without all danger. She will make thee good cheer, and entertain thee with delicate meat and drink ; but sit thou upon the ground, and desire brown bread, and then declare thy message unto her ; and when thou hast received such beauty as she giveth, in thy return appease the rage of the dog with thy other sop, and give thy other halfpenny to covetous Charon, and come the same way again into the world as thou wentest. But above all things have a regard that thou look not in the box, neither be not too curious about the treasure of the divine beauty.

In this manner the tower spake unto Psyche, and advertised her what she should do ; and immediately she took two halfpence, two sops, and all things necessary, and went to the mountain Tenarus to go towards hell. After that Psyche had passed by the lame ass, paid her halfpenny for passage, neglected the old man in the river, denied to help the women spinning, and filled the ravenous mouth of the dog with a sop, she came to the chamber

of Proserpina. There Psyche would not sit in any royal seat, nor eat any delicate meats, but kneeling at the feet of Proserpina, only contented with coarse bread, declared her message, and after she had received a mystical secret in the box, she departed, and stopped the mouth of the dog with the other sop, and paid the boatman the other halfpenny. When Psyche was returned from hell to the light of the world, she was ravished with great desire, saying,

Am not I a fool, that knowing that I carry here the divine beauty, will not take a little thereof to garnish my face, to please my love withal?

And by and bye she opened the box, where she could perceive no beauty, nor anything else, save only an infernal and deadly sleep, which immediately invaded all her members as soon as the box was uncovered, in such sort that she fell down upon the ground, and lay there as a sleeping corpse.

But Cupid, being now healed of his wound and malady, not able to endure the absence of Psyche, got him secretly out at a window of the chamber where he was enclosed ; and, receiving his wings, took his flight towards his loving wife ; whom when he had found, he wiped away the sleep from her face and put it again into the box, and awaked her with the tip of one of his arrows, saying,

Oh wretched caitiff, behold thou wert well nigh

perished again with thy overmuch curiosity ! Well, go thou and do thy message to my mother, and in the mean season I will provide for all things accordingly.

Wherewithal he took his flight into the air, and Psyche brought her present to Venus.

Cupid being more and more in love with Psyche, and fearing the displeasure of his mother, did pierce into the heavens, and arrived before Jupiter to declare his cause. Then Jupiter, after that he had eftsoons embraced him, gan say in this manner :

Oh my well beloved son, although thou hast not given due reverence and honour unto me as thou oughtest to do, but hast rather spoiled and wounded this my breast, whereby the laws and order of the elements and planets be disposed, with continual assaults of terrene luxury, and against all laws, and the discipline Julia, and the utility of the public weal, in transforming my divine beauty into serpents, fire, savage beasts, birds, and into bulls. Howbeit, remembering my modesty, and that I have nourished thee with my own proper hands, I will do and accomplish all thy desire, so that thou canst beware of spiteful and envious persons. And if there be any excellent maiden of comely beauty in the world, remember yet the benefit which I shall show unto thee by recompense of her love towards me again.

When he had spoken these words, he commanded Mercury to call all the gods to council, and if any of the celestial powers did fail of appearance he would be condemned in ten thousand pounds; which sentence was such a terror to all the goddesses, that the high theatre was replenished, and Jupiter began to speak in this sort :

Oh ye Gods ! registered in the books of the Muses, you all know this young man Cupid whom I have nourished with mine own hands, whose raging flames of his first youth I thought best to bridle and restrain. It sufficeth that he is defamed in every place for his adulterous living, wherefore all occasion ought to be taken away by means of marriage ; he hath chosen a maiden that fancieth him well, . . . let him have her still, and possess her according to his own pleasure !

Then he turned to Venus, and said,

And you, my daughter, take you no care, neither fear the dishonour of your progeny and estate, neither have regard in that it is a mortal marriage, for it seemeth unto me just, lawful, and legitimate by the law civil.

Incontinently after, Jupiter commanded Mercury to bring up Psyche, the spouse of Cupid, into the palace of heaven. And then he took a pot of immortality, and said,

*Hold, Psyche ! and drink, to the end thou mayst
be immortal, and that Cupid may be thine everlasting
husband !*

By and bye the great banquet and marriage feast was sumptuously prepared. Cupid sat down with his dear spouse between his arms ; Juno likewise with Jupiter, and all the other gods in order ; Ganymede filled the pot of Jupiter, and Bacchus served the rest. Their drink was nectar, the wine of the gods ; Vulcan prepared supper, the Hours decked up the house with roses and other sweet smells, the Graces threw about balm, the Muses sang with sweet harmony, Apollo tuned pleasantly to the harp, Venus danced finely, Satyrus and Paniscus played on their pipes—and thus Psyche was married to Cupid, and, after, she was delivered of a child whom we call Pleasure.

THE LIFE OF SAINT EUSTACE.

(From the *Legenda Aurea*, or *Golden Legend*.)

THERE is but little to be said about the origin of a book like the ‘*Legenda Aurea*.’ Its time and manner of publication are well known, and it has merely gone through such vicissitudes as, from its nature, might have been foretold—during the age of faith, translated, copied, and printed by the most cunning craftsmen, because of the worth of the work—then, neglected, and left to fill a gap upon the shelf of some lover of old lore, or, perhaps, to be unknown even to its possessors, as was the case not long ago with a copy existing in the public library at Maidstone. Also, since the book consists of a general collection of legends, it would neither be possible nor desirable, space and fitness being taken into account, to give a thorough history of the sources whence its matter was derived ; all that can be done is, after a short account of the general work, to examine somewhat the particular legend,

that of St. Eustace, which I have chosen as being very typical of the whole.

In the year 1290 the then Archbishop of Genoa, a Dominican commonly known as Jacobus de Voragine, feeling the want of any well assorted collection of those holy tales and legends, whether delivered by Scripture or by the mouths of un-inspired writers, which had hold upon the early Church, undertook the task of compiling such a record of saintly traditions as might form a text book of hagiology for all time. There was, it is true, a History of the Saints, written towards the close of the tenth century by Simon Metaphrastes, part of which is still extant ; but being in Greek, it existed only for the specially learned few, and what was wanted was a book adapted to the necessities of the clergy and the devout generally. This want the Archbishop supplied ; for the 'Legenda Aurea' remains the best collection of those old histories which moved the hearts of all in the middle ages, and still command the admiration of such as study its pages.

Originally written in the quasi-sacred Latin language, these lives of the saints of old and new times soon found their way into the vulgar tongues of other lands. Within thirty years, probably, they were rendered into French by Jean

Belet, who interspersed them with additional matter; his book has never been printed, but furnished the groundwork for a later edition, finished about 1380, from the pen of Jehan de Vignay, a monk hospitaller of Paris, who in his turn added to and amended the book. Of this version there are two MSS. in the library of the British Museum, although only one of them is perfect; it was printed in Paris as early as 1475. Nearly one hundred years later than De Vignay's labours, an English translation was undertaken by Caxton.

A similar work in the vernacular was already in existence, as he himself testifies, which, by collation with the French '*Legende Dorée*' and the Latin '*Legenda Aurea*,' assisted him in the production of that book, one of the first issued from the Westminster press, which we know as the '*Golden Legend*.' What this early English work was, it is now impossible to say with any certainty; but it may not impossibly have been that which exists among the Harleian MSS., and which is attributed to the beginning of the fifteenth century. Caxton's own account of the business is worth quoting; it occurs in the prologue to his first edition of the '*Golden Legend*,' and runs as follows: 'Against me here might some persons say that this legend hath be translated tofore, and truth

it is ; but forasmuch as I had by me a legend in French, another in Latin, and the third in English, which varied in many and divers places, and also many histories were comprised in the two other books which were not in the English book, and therefore I have written one out of the said three books which I have ordered otherwise than the said English legend is which was so tofore made.'

How long the work took Caxton is unknown, but it was evidently a considerable time, as he says that he 'in manner half desperate to have accomplished it, was in purpose to have left it : ' such a disaster was, however, hindered by William, Earl of Arundel, who not only promised to take 'a reasonable quantity' of copies when the book should be ready, but undertook to allow the printer during his lifetime an annuity of a buck in summer, and a doe in winter. Accordingly, Caxton persevered ; and the first edition was published in 1483 or 1484, to be followed by a second in 1487, but of neither of them is any known copy extant in a perfect state ; those which we possess are mostly from the press of Wynkyn de Worde.

It is now time to consider the particular legend here given ; and at the outset some may be inclined to cavil at the matter, inasmuch as we here find related of St. Eustace, a Roman martyr of the

second century, incidents which are familiar to all as traditionally affecting the life of St. Hubert, who died Bishop of Liege in the year 727. The whole episode of the miraculous hart is so similar to what is related of the latter saint's conversion, that one cannot help suspecting a pious fraud, and that some monkish historian, touched by the beauty of the story, engrafted it upon the more genuine acts of the good bishop.

Naturally, such a tale would soon gain implicit belief in the minds of the faithful: those who did not know about St. Eustace—as might well be the case with many in unlettered days and in northern countries—would have no reason for disputing its truth; and those who had heard or read of the old miracle would not in France, where the latter legend would probably be first put forth, feel disposed to question the repetition of such a mark of Divine favour towards one of their own land. It was only the changing of Trajan into Childeric, and of the Campagna into the Ardennes, and the thing was done—St. Hubert exalted, and St. Eustace, if ever known, forgotten. But that the legend was of old told of the Italian saint, there is some collateral evidence to show; for, as late as the middle of the fourteenth century, to which date the ablest commentators refer the

'Gesta Romanorum,' it was inserted therein, the incidents, and even the language, being nearly identical with those of the 'Golden Legend': it there forms the 110th chapter.

But, however the noble hunter of Aquitaine might in France and Belgium take precedence, the knight of Trajan's court still remained first in the estimation of his own countrymen, and appears in their art to the exclusion of St. Hubert, with whom he shares the honours of remembrance in northern lands to no small degree. For, even in England, three churches at least were dedicated to St. Eustace, the chiefest being the parish church of Tavistock, and the others at Ibberton and at Hoo respectively.

In Paris, not only was a church specially dedicated to his honour, but it boasts of the possession of his relics, removed there from St. Denis, where they had been originally deposited on their translation in the twelfth century, although it is true that a portion only of the saint's body lies in St. Eustache, his remains having been partly burnt by the Huguenots when they robbed his shrine in 1567. In Rome itself his name is now chiefly known as designating a cardinal; the martyrdom is commemorated on September 20, but it is hardly necessary to remark that the historical part of the legend is

obviously wrong, since Trajan ceased his reign in the year 117 A.D. I may here observe that in the 'Legenda Aurea' no mention whatever is made of St. Hubert, and as Caxton employed De Vignay's version for purposes of collation, it would seem as if the miraculous portion of the Bishop's history must have been of comparatively late rise; had the legend existed in the days of the French translators, they could hardly have failed to remark on the recurrence of so strange a miracle in modern times, and in their own land.

Not the least telling portion of the history is that which deals with the long wanderings of Placidus and Theopissa, and with the adventures of their children, all of which are told with a simple pathos that could hardly be surpassed; it is a triumph of story telling, merely considered as a novel.

It has already been said that St. Eustace retains his proper place in the art of his own country, and it may be added that in the greatest known instance where the miracle of the hart is commemorated in Northern art, he has at least some claim to be considered as the person represented. For the undated engraving by Albert Durer is expressly described as 'S. Eustache' in the engraver's own diary, though now universally known as 'St. Hubert.' The chief argument in favour of such

an alteration in the name is that, whereas the kneeling figure is that of a hunter, the martyr is, in all known instances, represented in the dress of a Roman soldier, as may be seen by reference to the picture by Domenichino, engraved in Mrs. Jameson's 'Sacred and Legendary Art,' or to that now in the Pitti Palace at Florence by Niccolo Soggi, which dates back to the early part of the sixteenth century. But on the other hand we have Durer's own testimony, and it is sufficiently known how mediæval art ignored, when convenient, such minor details as accuracy of costume. In much of the old stained glass of French cathedrals it is by no means uncommon to meet with the various episodes of the elder legend.

Strange as it may seem to our modern ideas, this legend has even been dramatized. There is in the library of the British Museum a sort of miracle play published at Florence in 1612, entitled '*La rappresentatione di Santo Eustachio*;' it is in the *ottava rima*, with stage directions, and is embellished with most wondrous woodcuts. In the French and Spanish languages there are also known tragedies on the subject, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As to its poetical treatment, this story hardly seems to have received the attention it deserves. A sixteenth century Italian poem

on the subject exists, also in the *ottava rima*, under the name of 'La Historia di San Eustachio ;' and there is a curious Norsk fragment on the same subject, attributed to Sveinbjorn Egilssyn. But in our own country there have been no late attempts to utilize the legend of St. Eustace.

A metrical romance is among the Cotton MSS., which Warton considered to have been taken from the French ; and in the Pepysian collection at Cambridge is a small black letter duodecimo, probably unique, entitled 'The worthie hystorie of the most noble and valyaunt Knight, Placidus, otherwise called Eustas'—printed in London by Henry Denham, 1596 ; but beyond these there appears to be no existing English poem on the subject. Neither have our native painters, past or present, been attracted by the story—a matter for wonder ! I may be told that Madame Rosa Bonheur has exhibited a picture which it pleased that lady to call 'St. Hubert's Stag.' To which I answer, that one cannot accept as a fitting artistic representation of this beautiful legend the well-drawn image of a big deer, between whose horns appears a sort of firework, entirely independent of the beast, and likely to retain its position opposite the beholder, should his presence frighten the stag away. The history of St. Eustace still awaits a British interpreter as far as art in any branch is concerned.

THE LIFE OF SAINT EUSTACE.

EUSTACE was named tofore his baptism Placidus, which is as much to say, as pleasant to God. And Eustace is said of *eu*, that is to say *good*, and *stachis*, that is *fortune*; therefore Eustace is, as it were, Good fortune. He was pleasant to God in his conversation, and after he held him in good works.

Eustace, which first was named Placidus, was master of the chivalry of Trajan the emperor, and was right busy in the works of mercy, but he was a worshipper of idols; and he had a wife of the same rite, and also of the deeds of mercy, of whom he had two sons, which he did do nourish after his estate, and because he was ententive to the works of mercy he deserved to be enlumined to the way of truth. So that on a day, as he was on hunting, he found an herd of harts, among whom he saw one more fair and greater than the other, which departed from the company and sprang into the thickest of the forest,

and the other knights ran after the other harts, but Placidus sued him with all his might, and enforced to take him. And when the hart saw that he followed him with all his power, at the last he went up on an high rock, and Placidus approaching nigh thought in his mind how he might take him, and as he beheld and considered the hart diligently, he saw between his horns the form of the Holy Cross shining more clear than the sun, and the image of Christ, which by the mouth of the hart, like as sometime Balaam by the ass, spake to him, saying,

Placidus, wherefore followest thou me hither ? I am appeared to thee in this beast for the grace of thee. I am Jesus Christ, whom thou honourst ignorantly ; thine alms have ascended up tofore me, and therefore I come hither, so that by this hart that thou huntest I may hunt thee.

And some other say, that this image of Jesus Christ which appeared between the horns of the hart said these words. And when Placidus heard that, he had great dread, and descended from his horse to the ground ; and an hour after he came to himself and arose from the ground, and said,

Rehearse again this that thou hast said, and I shall believe thee. And then Our Lord said,
I am Jesus Christ that formed heaven and earth ;

which made the light to increase, and divided it from darkness ; which established time, days and hours ; which formed man of the slime of the earth ; which appeared in earth in flesh for the health of the lineage human ; which was crucified, dead, buried, and arose the third day.

And when Placidus heard this he fell down again to the earth, and said, *I believe, Lord, that thou art He that made all things, and convertest them that err.*

And Our Lord said to him, *If thou believest, go to the bishop of the city, and do thee to be baptized.* And Placidus said to Him,

Lord, wilt thou that I hide this thing from my wife and my sons ? And Our Lord said to him,

Tell to them that they also make them clean with thee ; and see that thou come again to-morrow hither, that I may appear again to thee, and may show to thee that which shall come hereafter to thee.

And when he was comen home to his house, and had told this thing to his wife in their bed, she escried, *My Lord !* and said,

And I saw Him, this night that is passed, and said to me, To-morrow thou, thy husband, and thy sons shall come to me ; and now I know that it was Christ !

Then they went to the Bishop of Rome at midnight, which baptized them with great joy, and

named Placidus Eustace, and his wife Theopissa. And on the morrow Eustace went to hunt as he did before, and when he came nigh to the place he departed his knights as for to find venison. And anon he saw in the place the form of the first vision, and anon he fell down to the ground before the figure, and said,

Lord, I pray thee to show to me that which thou hast promised to me thy servant ! To whom Our Lord said,

Eustace, thou art blessed which hast taken the washing of grace, for now thou hast surmounted the devil which had deceived thee, and trodden him under foot ; now thy faith shall appear. The devil now, because thou hast forsaken him, is armed cruelly against thee, and it behoveth thee to suffer many things and pains for to have the crown of victory. Thou must suffer much by cause to humble thee from the high vanity of the world, and shalt afterwards be enhanced in spiritual riches ; thou therefore fail not, nor look not unto thy first glory. For thee behoveth that by temptations thou be another Job. And when thou shalt be so humbled, I shall come to thee, and shall restore thee unto thy first joy. Say to me now, whether thou wilt now suffer and take temptations, or in the end of thy life. And Eustace said to Him,

Lord, if it so behoveth, command that temptation

come to me now : but I beseech thee to grant to me the virtue of patience.

To whom Our Lord said, *Be thou constant, for my grace shall keep your souls.*

Then Our Lord ascended into heaven, and Eustace returned home and showed all this to his wife. After this a few days the pestilence assailed his servants and his knights, and slew them all. And in a little while after all his horses and his beasts died suddenly ; and after this, some that had been his fellows, seeing his depredation, entered into his house by night and robbed him, and bare away gold and silver, and despoiled him of all other things. And he, his wife, and children thanked God, and fled away by night all naked, and because they doubted shame, they fled into Egypt, and all his great possession became to ravin of wicked people. Then the king and all the senators sorrowed much for the master of the chivalry, which was so noble, because they might hear no tidings of him.

And as they went they approached the sea, and found a ship and entered into it for to pass. And the master of the ship saw the wife of Eustace was right fair, and desired much for to have her. And when they were passed over, he demanded his reward for their freight, and they had not whereof to pay, so that the master of the ship commanded

that the wife should be holden and retained for his hire, and would have her with him. And when Eustace heard that, he gainsayed it long. Then the master of the ship commanded his mariners to cast him into the sea, so that he might have his wife. And when Eustace saw that, he left his wife much sorrowfully, and took his two children and went weeping, and said,

Alas, woe am I for you, for your mother is delivered to a strange husband!

And thus sorrowing, he and his children came to a river, and for the great abundance of water he durst not pass that river with both his sons at once, which were then young. But at the last he left one of them at the brink of the river, and bare over that other on his shoulders. And when he had passed the river, he set down on the ground the child that he had borne over, and hasted him to fetch that other that he had left on the other side of the river. And when he was in the midst of the water, there came a wolf and took the child that he had borne over, and fled withal to the wood. And he then, all despaired of him, went for to fetch that other, and as he went there came a great lion and bare away the other child, so that he might not retain him, for he was in the middle of the river. And then he began to weep, and

draw his hair, and would have drowned himself in the water, if the divine purveyance had not letted him. And the herdmen and ploughmen saw the lion bearing the child alive, and they followed him with their dogs, so that by divine grace the lion left the child all safe without hurt. And other ploughmen cried and followed the wolf, and with their staves and falchions delivered the child whole and sound from his teeth without hurt. And so both the herdmen and ploughmen were of one village, and nourished these children among them. And Eustace knew nothing thereof, but weeping and sorrowing, saying to himself,

Alas, woe is me ! for tofore this mishap, I shone in great wealth like a tree, but now I am naked of all things. Alas, I was accustomed to be accompanied with a great multitude of knights, and I am now alone and am not suffered to have my sons. O Lord, I remember me that thou saidest to me, Thee behoveth to be tempted as Job was, but I see that in me is more done to than was to Job ; for he lost all his possessions, but he had a dunghill to sit on, but to me is nothing left ; he had friends which had pity on him, and I have none but wild beasts which have borne away my sons ; to him was his wife left, and my wife is taken from me and delivered to another. Oh, good Lord, give thou rest to my tribu-

lations, and keep thou so my mouth that mine heart decline not into words of malice, and be cast from thy visage.

And thus saying, and walking in great weeping, went into a street of the town, and there was hired to keep the fields of the men of that town, and so kept them fifteen years. His sons were nourished in another town, and knew not that they were brethren. And Our Lord kept the wife of Eustace, so that the strange man had not to do with her, nor touched her, but died and ended his life.

In that time the emperor and the people were much tormented of their enemies, and then they remembered of Placidas, how he many times had fought nobly against them. For whom the emperor was much sorrowful, and sent out into divers parts many knights to seek him, and promised to them that found him much riches and great honour. And two knights which had been under him in chivalry, came into the same street where he dwelled. And anon as Placidas saw them he knew them, and then he remembered his first dignity, and began to be heavy, and said,

Lord, I beseech thee grant to me that I may sometime see my wife, for as for my sons I know well that they be devoured of wild beasts.

And then a voice came to him, and said,

Eustace, have thou good affiance, for anon thou shalt recover thine honour, and shalt have thy wife and thy children.

And anon he met with these knights, and they knew him not, but demanded of him if he knew any strange man, named Placidus, and had a wife and two children. And he said, *Nay!* Yet he had them home to his hostel, and he served them. And when he remembered of his first estate, he might not hold him from weeping; then he went out and washed his face, and returned to serve them. And they considered and said that one to that other *How that this man resembleth much to him that we seek!* And that other answered,

Certainly he is like unto him; now let us see if he have a wound in his head, that he gat in battle.

Then they beheld and saw the sign of the wound, and then they wist well it was he that they sought. Then they arose and kissed him, and demanded of his wife and children; and he said that his sons were dead, and his wife was taken away from him. And then the neighbours ran for to hear this thing, because the knights told and recounted his first glory and his virtue; and they said to him the command of the emperor, and clad him with noble vestments. Then after the journey of fifteen days, they brought him to the emperor, and when he

heard of his coming, he ran anon against him, and when he saw him, he kissed him.

Then Eustace recounted tofore them all by order that which had happened to him ; and he was re-established unto the office to be again master of the chivalry, and was constrained to do the office as he did before. And then he counted how many knights there were, and saw that there were but few as to the regard of their enemies, and commanded that all the young men should be gathered in the cities and towns. And it happened that the country where his sons were nourished should make and send two men of arms. Then all the inhabitants of that country ordained these two young men his sons, most convenable above all other, for to go with the master of the chivalry. And then when the master saw these two young men of noble form, and adorned honestly with good manners, they pleased him much, and ordained that they should be with the first of his table. Then he went thus to the battle. And when he had subdued his enemies to him, he made his host to rest three days in a town, where his wife dwelled and kept a poor hostelry. And these two young men, by the purveyance of God, were lodged in the habitation of their mother without knowing what she was. And on a time, about

midday, as they spake that one to that other of their infancy,—and their mother which was there hearkened what they said much ententively,—so that the greatest said to the less,

When I was a child, I remember none other thing save that my father, which was master of the knights, and my mother, which was right fair, had two sons, that is to say, me and another younger than I, and was much fair; and they took us and went out of their house by night, and entered into a ship for to go I wot not whither. And when we went out of the ship our mother was left in the ship, I wot not in what manner, but my father bare me and my brother, sore weeping. And when he came to a water, he passed over with my younger brother, and left me on the bank of the water. And when he returned a wolf came and bare away my brother, and, ere my father might come to me, a great lion issued out of the forest, and took me up, and bare me to the wood; but the herdmen that saw him took me from the mouth of the lion, and I was nourished in such a town, as ye know well, but I could never know what happened to my brother, nor where he is.

And when the younger heard this, he began to weep and say,

Forsooth, like as I hear, I am thy brother, for

they that nourished me said that they had taken me from a wolf.

And then they began to embrace, and kiss each other, and weep. And when their mother had heard all this thing, she considered long in herself, if they were her two sons, because they had said by order what was befallen them. And the next day following she went to the master of the chivalry, and required him, saying,

Sir, I pray thee that thou command that I may be brought again to my country; for I am of the country of the Romans, and here I am a stranger.

And in saying these words, she saw in him signs, and knew by them that he was her husband, and then she might no longer forbear, but fell down at his feet and said to him,

Sir, I pray thee to tell of thy first estate; for I ween that thou art Placidus, master of the knights, which otherwise art called Eustace. Whom Jesus Christ converted, and hast suffered such temptation and such, and I, that am thy wife, was taken from thee on the sea, which nevertheless have been kept from all corruption, and hadst of me two sons, Agapitus and Theospitus.

And Eustace hearing this, and diligently considered and beheld her, anon knew that she was his wife, and wept for joy and kissed her, and

glorified much Our Lord God which comforted the discomforted. And then said his wife,

Sir, where be our sons ?

And he said that they were slain of wild beasts, and recounted to her how he had lost them. And she said,

Let us give thankings to God, for I suppose that like as God hath given to us grace each to find other, so shall He give us grace to recover our sons.

And he said, *I have told to thee that they be devoured of wild beasts.* And she then said :

I sat yesterday in a garden, and heard two younglings thus and thus expounding their infancy, and I believe that they be our sons. Demand them, and they shall tell to thee the truth.

Then Eustace called them, and heard their infancy, and knew that they were his sons ; then he embraced them, and the mother also, and kissed them also. Then all the host enjoyed strongly of the finding of his wife and children, and for the victory of the barbarians.

And when he was returned, Trajan was then dead, and Adrian succeeded in the empire, which in all felonies was the worst ; and, as well for the victory as for the finding of his wife and children, he received them much honourably, and did do make a great dinner and feast, and on the next

day after he went to the temple of the idols for to do sacrifice for the victory of the barbarians. And then the emperor, seeing that Eustace would not do sacrifice, neither for the victory, nor for that he had founden his wife and children, warned and commanded him that he should do sacrifice. To whom Eustace said,

I adore and do sacrifice to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and only serve Him.

And then the emperor, replenished with ire, put him, his wife, and his sons in a certain place, and did do go to them a right cruel lion—and the lion came to them, and inclined his head to them like as he had worshipped them, and departed. Then the emperor did do make a fire under an ox of brass or copper, and when it was fire-hot he commanded that they should be put therein all quick and alive. And then the saints prayed, and commended them unto Our Lord, and entered into the ox, and there yielded up their spirits to Jesus Christ. And the third day after, they were drawn out tofore the emperor, and were founden all whole and not touched of the fire, nor as much as an hair of them was brent, nor none other thing on them. And then the Christian men took the bodies of them, and laid

them in a right noble place honourably, and made over them an oratory.

And they suffered death under Adrian the emperor, which began about the year of Our Lord an hundred and twenty, in the kalends of November.

ALEXANDER AND LODOWICK.

(From 'The Seven Wise Masters.')

THE romance of 'The Seven Wise Masters,' from which has been selected the following story, is pretty generally acknowledged to be of Eastern origin. Indeed, since in 1838 M. Loiseleur Deslongchamps devoted himself to tracing and establishing this fact, there has never been any doubt on the subject, so admirably was his task fulfilled; and apart from the existence of a direct chain of evidence, the book itself contains much internal testimony—such as the frequent mention of leprosy, and the localities awarded to particular incidents—to favour the common verdict. Its history seems to be this. It was originally compiled at no great date from the Christian era, by a Hindoo moralist, Sendabar or Sendabad by name, and became so popular as to be translated into the Persic, Arabic, Syriac, and Hebrew. From the Arabic, or possibly from the Persic, the romance was rendered into

the Greek tongue as 'Syntipas.' Under this name it still exists both in manuscript and in a printed form, having been published in Paris in the year 1828.

From 'Syntipas' was probably derived a Latin romance, written towards the close of the twelfth century, by Dom Jehan, a Cistercian of the abbey of Haute Seille, in the diocese of Nancy, and by him dedicated to the then Bishop of Metz, which was the immediate cause of our Western knowledge of the work. For Herbers, a minstrel of l'Ile de France, being taken with the story, versified it, under the title of 'Dolopathos,' and thus naturalized it. There is much question whether we are to believe that this Latin version was identical with the 'Historia Septem Sapientum' from which all modern copies are translated. M. Deslongchamps thought it was; but M. de Montaignon, in his able preface to an edition of 'Dolopathos' published in Paris in 1856, supports a contrary opinion, basing his decision chiefly upon the fact that the general idea only is the same, the stories being nearly all of them different.

This French romance exists in the Bibliothèque Impériale in two manuscripts. Whether Dom Jehan's book be lost or no, the existing Latin version is undoubtedly of very early origin, a printed copy

being in the library of the British Museum which bears the date 1490. It soon found translators, and was printed in Dutch seventeen years before that date, and in 1520, in English, by Wynkyn de Worde, having also made its way in Spain and Italy.

In the latter country 'The Seven Wise Masters' became popular, before the middle of the sixteenth century, under the name of 'Erasto,' from which work a translation was, in or about 1674, made by Francis Kirkman. But although the translator claims in his preface to have made a great improvement upon that edition which has been already mentioned, there is nothing in his work to justify such a pretence. The style is as inferior as may be supposed from the later age in which he wrote, the four additional stories are by no means an improvement, and the catastrophe is so much weaker that Kirkman is fain to give an epitome of the old ending. The book is, however, remarkable as containing the first verse of Shirley's exquisite lyric 'The glories of our birth and state,' and as bearing testimony to the great popularity in this country of the romance, which is stated to have been so universal a lesson book, especially in Ireland, that 'next to the Horn-book and knowledge of letters, children are in general put to read

in it.' Mr. Ellis, in his remarks on the subject, considers that Francis Kirkman merely collated the Italian book with a translation from the French version of 'Erasto.' Under correction, I think that his statement means, that he took his matter from the Mantuan edition, comparing it with a translation of the 'Historia Septem Sapientum' which had been published at Rouen in the beginning of the seventeenth century, under the title of 'Le Livre des Sept Sages de Rome.'

The old version held its own, and with very little alteration in the diction was continually published, first in its original form, and afterwards as a cheap book, up to the end of the last century. Perhaps the only country where it still keeps its hold upon the public is Spain; there it may still be bought under the name of 'Los Siete Sabios,' in the peculiar broad sheet which prevails in the publication of cheap Spanish literature.

Meanwhile, Herbers had followers in his art in our own country, and at least two metrical versions, by unknown hands, had appeared. The earlier of these would seem to be 'The Proces of the Seven Sages,' printed in Weber's 'Metrical Romances,' from the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum; it is in octosyllabic verse, and probably dates from the fifteenth century: it was thought by Mr. Douce

to have been taken directly from the French. The other, which exists in manuscript in the public library at Cambridge, is later, and was edited by Mr. Wright for the Percy Society in 1845, with a most exhaustive preface on the subject of its origin. In addition to these, a Scottish poem entitled 'The Sevin Sages' was printed in Edinburgh in 1578. Manuscripts of any of the known metrical versions are rare.

The argument of the entire book is simple enough. An emperor who is variously styled Cyrus, Dolo-pathos, Poncianus, and Dioclesian, having a favourite son, and one only, commits him to the care of seven sages, who educate him in all wisdom far from the court, his father having married again. He being sent for, there arises in the minds of his masters a great fear; for it seems that should he speak on his arrival a shameful death awaits him; but, by reading of the stars, he solves the difficulty, and finds that he must keep silence during a week only. They agree that each master shall speak for him on each following day of that week, and all go to the court. Then the prince is beloved by his step-mother, and denying her evil will is by her charged with an attempt upon her virtue, and so, holding his peace for the omen's sake, is by his father doomed to death. But the seven wise masters con-

tinually save him from the gallows by means of tales bearing upon the ill results of hasty judgment ; the empress, in her turn, answering each with another anecdote bearing upon her side of the question. On the eighth day the boy breaks silence, and having discovered his innocence and the treachery of his father's wife, clenches the matter with the story of ' Alexander and Lodowick.' Upon which the wicked step-mother is adjudged to the stake, and all ends happily.

Many of the stories in the book have become known under other forms. Boccacio borrowed from ' The Seven Wise Masters,' and many since his time have availed themselves of anecdotes from one or other of the versions, for the versions differ widely as to the stories narrated, while agreeing in their common plan. The present story is a striking instance of this fact. It is introduced in none of the Eastern copies, and must probably be ascribed to the author of the ' Historia Septem Sapientum,' at least as it is here given. In the metrical romances already mentioned it appears in a most mutilated form, the entire episode of the loves of Alexander and Lodowick being omitted, and only that portion given which turns upon the language of fowls. But the story was too beautiful not to engage the popular fancy, and found its way at an early date

both to the stage and to the voices of the people in ballad form, as will presently be shown.

This singular discrepancy between the prose and the metrical stories may be traced to an incorporation with some original matter of more modern romance literature. The bare framework is obviously Eastern, dealing as it does with the knowledge of bird-talk ; but for the pith of the tale one must come down to Gothic times. I do not think that any Oriental writer could have risen to the idea of such a sublimity of self-denial as is shown in the history of these two friends ; Christianity was needed to show how much more blessed it is to give than to receive. The story is so perfectly human, not making any of its actors a demigod, but simply telling the love of two men, one for the other, and the gratitude of one woman for kindness, and what came of it all. The miracle too is told with such perfect faith that in reading one believes it, and it seems the natural ending of things. And of the origin of this portion of 'Alexander and Lodowick' it is now fitting to speak.

In the old chronicle, rightly or wrongly attributed to Archbishop Turpin, which celebrates the good deeds of Charlemagne and his Paladins, mention is made of two knights, Amys and Amylion, of whose story we get more certain information in a fifteenth

century French novel entitled 'Milles et Amys,' and in a lay which has been epitomized by Mr. Ellis in his 'Early English Romances.' One cannot but regret, for the sake of the general public, that the bad time in which Mr. Ellis lived so far affected his labour as to make him seem half ashamed of the noble work which he was doing in restoring to the British nation that treasure of bygone literature which had for so many ages lain unused. Still, in spite of the flippancy which so much disfigures all the narrations, some idea may be gained therefrom of the real beauty of the story. It is a tale of such friendship as men dream of now, and believed in once upon a time ; of the utter devotion of one man to another, and of his fellow's gracious return of love ; a tale of truth and gratitude. It is not needful to recite the details, for they will in their essentials be found in the following story of 'Alexander and Lodowick,' of which all, except the part dealing with the nightingale and the ravens, is taken bodily therefrom—and taken, it must be said, with a difference ; for the adapter, whether he were monk or layman, was a true man and a poet, and has unutterably amended and adorned the legend with which he dealt. I think it is enough to show this, if Florentine be compared with Belisante the princess, as she appears in 'Amys and Amylion.'

The tale of 'Alexander and Lodowick,' though slighted by the rhymers who versified 'The Seven Wise Masters,' by no means fell idly upon the common ear. It was dramatized at an early date, and gave more certain proof of its hold on the vulgar mind by passing into the ballad form; a copy of it in this latter shape exists at Cambridge in the Pepysian collection, as 'The pleasant history of Alexander and Lodowick,' to the tune of '*Flying Fame*.' I spoke but now of the inferiority to 'The Seven Wise Masters' of Kirkman's 'Erastus;' and to prove the assertion, it is only necessary for the reader to compare with the story, as here given from Wynkyn de Worde, the seventeenth century relation, in which the friends appear as Entichus—query, Antiochus?—and Arthur, prince of Britain. There is a story in the '*Gesta Romanorum*,' cap. 116, which treats of the likeness of two sons to Pepin, king of France, which may possibly have some remote connection with this same romance.

As far as can be ascertained, painters have never yet availed themselves of this most beautiful and pathetic story, and, with the exception of the early drama already mentioned, it never seems to have reached the stage, at which we may with reason admire! Neither, with the exception of 'Amys and Amylion,' and of the rude ballad, are there any

known renderings into verse of these adventures of two brothers in arms, whose exploits, whose love, and whose sorrows, with their complement of joy, yet await a fitting interpreter.

In conclusion, it is enough to refer those who desire more certain and fuller information on the subject of 'The Seven Wise Masters' to Mr. Wright's essay already mentioned, and to M. de Montaignon's preface to 'Dolopathos.'

*THE HISTORY OF ALEXANDER AND
LODOWICK.*

THERE was a knight which had but one son, that he loved right much in beginning, as ye now all only have me, whom he delivered to a master of far countries to nourish and to learn. The child was of a great wit, and profited much, and grew as well in learning as in body. And when he had dwelled with his master seven years, his father desired to see him, and sent letters to him that he should come again into his country, and visit his friends, in likewise as ye have sent for me. The child was obedient to his father, and came at his commandment, of whose coming he joyed much, for he was as well grown in his members as in doctrine. To every man he appeared pleasant and gentle. It happened upon a day that, the father and mother sitting at the table, and the child serving them, a nightingale came flying afore the window whereas they sat, and began for to sing so sweetly that they marvelled. And the knight said,

Oh ! how sweetly this bird singeth ! Well were him that could understand his song, and could show the interpretation thereof ! Then the son said,

My worshipful father, the song of the nightingale I could well declare, but I fear your displeasure.

The father said, *Say hardily, my son, the interpretation of the bird, and then ye shall prove whether I shall be angry or not, but I shall mark well the reason of mine anger.*

And when the son heard that, he said, *The nightingale hath said in his song, that I shall become a great lord, that I shall be honoured and worshipped of all men, and namely of my father, the which shall bring the water for to wash in mine hands, and my mother shall hold the towel.*

The father said, *Thou shalt never see the day such service of us to have, nor none such dignity shall follow thee !*

And in great malice and wodeness he took his son upon his shoulders, and ran to the sea, and cast him in it, and said,

Lie there, the interpretator of the bird's song !

The child could swim, and swam to a land where he was four days without meat or drink. The fifth day there came a ship sailing, and as the child saw that, he called loud to the shipmen, and said,

For the love of God, deliver me from the peril of death !

The shipmen saw that it was a fair young man ; they had compassion on him, and went with their boat, and fetched him aboard, and into far countries with them they led him, and sold him there to a duke. The child grew goodly and fair, and the duke loved him much, and had him greatly in his favour.

Upon a time, the king of that realm let call and assemble all the great lords and noblemen of his land to a general council. This duke prepared and ordained him to go to the council, and marked the wisdom and the wit of the child, and took the child with him. And when they were all gathered and assembled before the king in his council,

My well-beloved lords and friends, said the king, will ye wit the cause wherefore that I have called you to this council ? Then said they all,

We be all, sovereign lord, at your commandment.

Then the king said,

It is a secret matter that I shall show you. If that any man can open it, and declare what that it signifieth, I swear and promise unto him by my crown that I shall give to him mine only daughter in marriage, and he shall be my fellow in my realm during my life, and after my death he shall have and possess

all the whole kingdom. And the mystery of the council is this: three ravens always follow me, where-soever that I go; they leave me not, but cry with such horrible voices, that it is great pain for me to hear them, and to behold their lookings. And therefore if there be any man the which that knoweth the cause of their following, and can show what they mean by their crying, and void them from me, without doubt I shall fulfil this promise that I have made.

And as the king had thus said, there was none found in all the council that wist the cause or could move or put away the ravens. Then said the child to the duke,

My lord, think ye that the king will hold his promise or word if I accomplish his will and desire? Then the duke said,

I think he will hold that he hath promised; but will ye that I give the king knowledge of you, what ye can do? Then the child said,

I will my life set in pledge, and I shall perform and make it good that I have said.

When the duke heard that, he went to the king and said,

My lord the king, here is a young man that is right cunning and wise, the which promiseth for to satisfy and fulfil in all things your desire as touching the ravens if ye will fulfil that ye have promised.

The king swore by the crown of his kingdom,
What I have promised in all things shall be fulfilled.

Then brought he the child before the king, and
when the king saw him he spake to him,

O fair child, can ye give answer to my question ?

The child said,

My lord, yea, in the best wise. Your question is wherefore that the ravens follow you, and horribly cry upon you, to which I answer,—Upon a time it happened, that two ravens, a male and a female, had brought forth between them the third raven ; upon the said se(ASON) was so great famine and scarcity of all manner of things, that men, beasts, and fowls died and perished for default. The third raven that time being young in the nest, the mother left it, seeking where she might best get her living, and came no more to the nest. The male raven seeing that, with great penury and labour fed the young raven till that he was able to fly ; and when the dear tide was past and gone, then the female raven came again to the young raven and would hold fellowship and company with him. And as the male raven saw that he would have driven her away, saying thus, that she in his great mischief and necessity left him and his company, and therefore now she should want his company and fellowship. She alleged and said, that she had in his

birth great labour and sorrow, and suffered penury, and therefore of his company she should rather joy than the father. For this, my sovereign lord, they follow you, asking the right judgment, which of them both shall have the young raven in their company, and this is the cause of their horrible clamour and noise that they make daily upon you. But, my lord, had ye hereupon a right wise sentence given, ye should never more see them or be troubled with their crying.

Then said the king,

For the cause that the mother hath left and forsaken the young raven in his most necessity, it standeth with reason and justice that she shall want and be without his fellowship. And where that she saith and allegeth, that in the bearing and birth of him she had great pain and travail, that helpeth her not, for that pain was turned into joy as soon as she saw the young raven in the world. But for that the male is the cause of production and generation in every beast, and also that he the young raven in his necessity sustained and fed unto the recovering and nourishing of his body, therefore I give for a judgment and for a sentence definitive, that the young raven shall abide and hold company with the father, and not with the mother.

And when the ravens heard this sentence, with a great noise and cry they flew up in the air, and

were no more seen nor found in all that region. When that this was done, the king demanded of the young man what his name was. He answered, *I am called Alexander.* Then said the king,

I will have one thing of you, that ye from henceforth shall name and take me and none other for your father but me, for ye shall marry my daughter, and ye shall be possessor of all my realm.

The young Alexander abode and dwelt still with the king, and every man had to him favour and love ; for he began to haunt and occupy himself in justs and in tourneys, wherein at all times he had the prize above all other that were in all Egypt, so that his peer or like was not found ; and there was not so hard nor so obscure a question put unto him, but that he could assoil it.

At that time was there an emperor named Titus, that excelled in gentleness, courtesy, and curiosity of all other emperors, kings, and princes in the world. Insomuch that such a fame and noise flew and ran over all the world of it, that whatsoever he was that would profit in cunning manners or behaving, that he should go to the emperor's court. And when Alexander heard that, he said to the king,

My most honourable father and lord, ye wot well that all the world is full of the fame of the emperor, so that it is delectable to abide and dwell in his court.

Wherefore, if it please you, my lord and father, I would gladly go to his court, that I might be wiser and prompter in manners and behaving than I am.

Thereupon answered the king,

It pleaseth me right well, but I would that ye take with you plenty of gold and silver, and other necessities, so much that ye mine honour therewith may save, and that ye may have also that is to you requisite and behoveful. And also me seemeth it were expedient, that ye afore your departing should marry my daughter.

Then answered Alexander,

Will it please you, my lord, to spare me at this time, and at my coming home again I shall wed her with all honour as to her appertaineth?

The king answered,

Sithence it is your will to go to the emperor's court, I license you, and thereto I consent.

Alexander took leave of the king, and took with him treasure enough, and went to the emperor's court. And when he was come with a fair company, he went afore the emperor, and fell on his knees, and saluted him and did him reverence. The emperor rose from his seat imperial, and kissed him, and asked of him of whence and what he was, and wherefore he was comen. He answered and said,

I am son and heir to the king of Egypt, and am come to do service to your most high majesty, if it please you to accept me.

The emperor said that he was right welcome, and committed him to his steward, and made him his carver. The steward ordained him a fair chamber, and purveyed him all things that were necessary to the same. And Alexander behaved him so well and wisely, that in short time of all people he was beloved.

Not long after that, came the king's son of France to do service to the emperor, and to learn nurture; whom the emperor received honourably, and demanded his name, and of what kindred he was come. He answered,

I am son to the king of France, and I have to name Lodowick your servant.

Then said the emperor,

I have made Alexander my carver, and ye shall be my cup-bearer, that always ye shall do service afore me at my table,

And commanded his steward to assign him a lodging, whom he assigned with Alexander in his chamber. These were so like in stature, in visage, and in conditions, that unneth the one might be discerned from the other, but that Alexander was more in cunning, and lightlier in his deeds than

Lodowick was, for Lodowick was a feminine man, and shame-faced ; and these two young men loved well together.

This emperor had a daughter only, named Florentine, the which was right fair and gracious, and should be his heir, whom he loved entirely, which had a court by herself, and servants to her assigned. To whom the emperor every day was accustomed to send from his table of his dainties, in tokening of love, by the hand of Alexander ; whereupon the daughter began to have him marvellously in her favour because of his wisdom and his gracious demeanour. It happened upon a day, Alexander at the meat time had such a business that he served not at the table nor none other gave attendance for him in his room ; Lodowick perceived that, and served in his stead. And when he had served the emperor in his last service upon his knee, the emperor commanded him to bear a dish unto his daughter as he was wont to do, thinking him to be Alexander. Then took Lodowick the dish, and yede to the palace of the emperor's daughter, and saluted her with great reverence, and set the meat afore her, but unto that time he had not seen her. She perceived anon that it was not Alexander, and said to him in this manner,

What is your name, and whose son are ye ?

And he answered to her and said,
Madam, I am the king's son of France, and my name is Lodowick.

She said,

I thank you of your labour.

And he took his leave and departed. In the mean time came Alexander to the table, and they fulfilled their service. The dinner done, anon Lodowick went to his bed sore sick; and Alexander perceiving that, went to his chamber and said to him,

O my best beloved friend and fellow, Lodowick, how is it with you, and what is the cause of your infirmity?

He answered him, and said,

The cause of it I know not, but I feel me so sick that I fear me I cannot escape the death.

Alexander said,

The cause of your infirmity and disease I know well. For to-day, whenas ye bare the meat unto the emperor's daughter, ye beheld her visage and beauty so fervently, that your heart is taken and ravished with her love.

Thereupon he answered,

O Alexander, all the physicians in the world could not more truly judge my sickness, but I fear it shall be my death!

Then said Alexander,

Be of good comfort, and I shall help you unto my power,

And yede unto the market, and bought with his own money a fair cloth set with precious stones, unknown to Lodowick, and presented it on his behalf unto the maiden. And as she saw that, she asked him where he might that costly and precious cloth find to buy ; and he said,

Madam, it is the son of the most Christian king that sendeth it unto you for your love ; for he, but for one sight that he hath had of you, is so sick that he lieth upon his bed unto the death, and therefore if ye suffer him to perish ye shall never recover again your honour.

Then said she,

O Alexander, would ye thus counsel me ? . . . God defend that ! And be ye sure, Alexander, that of such messages ye shall never more have nor win thanks ; therefore go ye out of my sight, and speak no more thereof to me !

When Alexander heard that, he did his obeisance and departed. The next day Alexander went again to the city, and bought a chaplet that was two times more in value than the cloth, and therewith he yede to the maiden's chamber, and gave it to her on the behalf of Lodowick. And when she

saw that costly gift, she said unto him in this manner,

I marvel of you, that so oftentimes as ye have seen and spoken with me, that ye have not done your own errand or spoken for yourself, but for another !

Then he answered,

O madam, I have not been so disposed, because that my birth is not to be compared with yours. And also it happened me never such a case that my heart was so wounded, and he that hath a good fellow is bound for to do him good and true fellowship ; and therefore, most excellent princess, of your most abundant pity, have compassion upon him and make him whole that ye have so wounded unto the death, that it be not for ever laid to your cruelty and unpiteous heart !

She answered him, *Go your ways, for at this time I will give you none answer thereof.*

And as he heard that, he took his leave and departed. And the third day he went unto the market, and bought a girdle that three times was more in value and costlier than the chaplet was, and presented it unto her on the behalf of Lodowick. And when she saw and beheld that so precious, she said unto Alexander,

Say to Lodowick that he come to my chamber about the third hour in the night, and he shall find the door open.

And Alexander hearing that, he was glad, and went to his fellow, and said,

My best beloved fellow, be ye of good comfort, for I have conquered the maiden unto you, and in this night I shall bring you unto her chamber.

And when that was said, he stert up as though that he had wakened out of his sleep, and was well revived, and for great joy he was made all whole. And the next night following, Alexander took Lodowick and brought him unto the chamber of the lady, with whom he was in joy and solace all the night, and from that time forth all her heart was upon him so that there was but one love betwixt them both. And after that, Lodowick used her oftentimes to visit, so that it came by process of time to the ears of the knights of the court, how that the emperor's daughter was known by Lodowick, and conspired amongst themselves how that they might him therewithal find, and him to take or slay. As Alexander had knowledge thereof, he armed him to withstand them, and when the knights understood that, they, fearing Alexander, suffered his fellow to go in peace; and Alexander many times put himself in jeopardy for him, he not knowing thereof, but the maid knew it well.

In short time after that, there came letters to

Alexander of the death of the king of Egypt, that he should hastily come and receive his kingdom with honour and joy, and that showed he anon to the maiden and to Lodowick, and also of his departing, whereof they were sorrowful and heavy. He said also unto the emperor,

My most redoubted lord, please it you for to understand that I have received letters of the death of my father, wherefore it behoveth me to go and receive the kingdom, an that ye will license me to depart; and for all benefits to-done I offer myself and all my goods, and rather than I should by my going away offend or displease you, my lord, I shall forsake all my realm, and all I have in the world, and abide with you still. Then said the emperor,

Know ye for certain that of your departing I am right heavy, for ye were unto me the best servant that was in all my house. But it becometh not an emperor to let his servants from their promotions or advancements, but sooner to promote them unto higher and greater honour. Therefore, go ye unto our treasurer, and he shall deliver you as much gold as ye will have, and in the name of God, and with my blessing, go into your country!

And thus Alexander had leave of the emperor, and bad farewell; and many of the court were sorrowful of his departing, for of all he was

beloved. Lodowick, with the maiden, brought him on his way well seven mile. After that Alexander would not suffer them for to go further ; then fell they both to the ground for great sorrow, and Alexander took and lifted them both up again from the earth, and comforted them with fair and sweet words, and said,

O Lodowick, my most beloved fellow, I warn you that the secrets, being betwixt you and my lady, ye hide them, and keep them as privily as ye may, and take good heed to all things. For I wot another shall come and be in my stead that shall envy you of the favour and grace that ye stand in with the emperor, and day and night shall lie in wait to take you with a fault and to put you to a rebuke.

Then answered Lodowick and said, *O Alexander, I shall beware as much as to me is possible, but how shall I now do when I want your company? Therefore one thing I shall desire of you, that ye will take this ring of me for a remembrance.*

Then said he, *I shall for the love of you gladly receive the ring, and yet should I never without the ring forget you*—and committed them to God. Then they embraced each other about the neck, and kissed, and so departed from other.

Not long after that, the king's son of Spain, named Guido, was received of the emperor in the

room and place of Alexander, to whom the steward assigned Alexander's place and chamber, which was sore against the will of Lodowick, but he could not amend it. Guido, perceiving that Lodowick against his will had him in his fellowship, anon he took and had envy against him ; so that Lodowick for a long time, for fear of the said Guido, kept him out of the company of the said maid. Nevertheless afterward, overcome with the love of the maiden, sometime haunted and went again to her as he aforetime had done. Guido, shortly perceiving, awaited so long time thereupon that he the truth knew, and was thereof in surety, that the maiden was by Lodowick known and had accompanied with him. Upon a time, it happened that the emperor stood in his hall, and praised greatly Alexander of his gentleness and wisdom. That hearing, Guido said,

My lord, he is not so much worthy to be commended as ye ween, for he hath been a long while a traitor in your house.

Then the emperor said, *Tell me how!* Guido said,

Ye have but one daughter only, the which shall be your heir, and that Lodowick hath defouled . . . by the help of Alexander, and he goeth to her every night when it pleaseth him.

And when the emperor heard that he was sore moved, and waxed angry, and it happened Lodowick upon the same time to come through the hall, and when the emperor saw him, he said,

What hear I of thee, thou evil and untrue body? If it be found and proved true, thou shalt die the most shameful death that can be devised!

Lodowick said, *My lord the emperor, what is the cause?* Guido answered,

I say and depose here afore my lord against thee, that thou hast defouled his only daughter, and every night thou goest to her, . . . and that in battle I shall prove and make good upon thy body with my body! Then said Lodowick,

I am innocent and not defective in that crime, and falsely thou puttest that and layest upon me, and thereupon I hold the battle; for I trust on God thy falsehood shall come upon thine own head.

Then the emperor assigned them the day of battle and fighting. That done, Lodowick went unto the maiden, and showed to her the cause and the day of battle by the emperor assigned, and in what manner Guido had him accused, and said to her,

Now it behoveth me to have your counsel, or else I must die; for why as ye know it had not availed me to have gainsayed the battle, without I would

have yielded myself guilty. Guido is strong and hardy in arms, that his like is none but Alexander, and I am weak and feeble, and therefore if I hold the battle against him I am but a dead man, and so shall ye abide shamed and rebuked. Then said she,

Do my counsel, in that that ye mistrust yourself, go hastily unto my father and say to him that ye have received letters, whereby that ye are ascertained that the lord your father is sore sick, and lieth upon his death bed, and desireth to see you and speak with your person, and to dispose his kingdom and his goods afore he depart out of this world; and desire his license, for the love of your father, that ye may go and visit him, and that he will prorogue and lengthen the day of battle, while that ye may go and come. And when ye have obtained his congée or license, as hastily as ye may, go secretly to the king Alexander, and when ye are come to him, take him apart and show him the cause of your coming, and require him in this your utter extremity that he will us help and aid.

And when that Lodowick had heard this counsel, it pleased him well, and did hereafter. His leave gotten, and longer day or term of battle prefixed and assigned, departed, and took his journey towards the realm of Egypt, and never letted day nor night till he came unto king Alexander's

castle. And when the king Alexander had understanding of his coming, he was much glad and went to meet him, and received him honourably, and had wonder of his coming. Then said Lodowick,

O my dear lord, and my best beloved friend, my life and my death is in your hands ; for as ye said to me afore that I should have another fellow, the which should lie in await to espy me and to destroy me, without I saw the more wisely to myself ; and as long as I might I absented me, till that I could no longer, but afterwards, the king's son of Spain making watch so long on me till that he perceived the truth, and hath accused me unto the emperor, so that from this day unto the eighth day hereafter prefixed it behoveth me to come and fight with him body against body. And, as ye know well, he is a strong and an hardy man, and I am weak and feeble, and therefore hath Florentine counselled me that I should not hold this my charge from you ; for she knoweth you for a faithful friend, and that ye would not leave us in this necessity.

Then said Alexander, *Is there anybody that knoweth of your coming unto me for this matter, more than Florentine ?*

He answered him and said, *No creature living ; for I took leave of the emperor to go and visit my*

father lying grievously sick. Then asked Alexander him, What counsel hath Florentine given to you, how and in what wise I might help you? He said,

O most constant and faithful friend, in this wise she hath counselled me—considering that we be like, that ye should come and do the battle with him; no man shall know you but she, and the battle done I shall come again to the court, and ye unto your country.

Then he asked when the day should be of the battle, and he said, *This day eight days.* Then said Alexander,

If I should this day tarry, then can I not come to that day prefixed, therefore, see what I shall do. I have bidden all my subjects that tomorrow they should come and be at my wedding and bridal, and if I should go then is that day lost, and if I go not and do the battle, then Florentine and ye are both undone! What think ye now best for to do?

When Lodowick heard that, he fell to the earth, and began to sigh and sorrow out of measure, saying,

Sorrow and heaviness come to me on all sides!

Then said Alexander unto him,

Be of good comfort, for I shall not forsake you thus, though that I should lose my wife and kingdom; but hearken what that I have thought.

Insomuch as we are both like, so that the one of us cannot be known from the other but we be both together, and I am not yet greatly known here, but my barons and other folks shall take you for me, therefore, here shall ye abide and tarry, and marry my wife in my stead, and hold the feast and bridal, and do in all things as though I were there myself present; except whenas ye come to bed with my wife—look that ye be there true and faithful! And I shall without tarrying go and take my horse, and ride thither as the battle shall be, and if God give me the victory that I may overcome and vanquish your enemy, I shall come again secretly, and ye shall go again to your parts and dwelling place.

This done, Alexander bade Lodowick farewell, and took his journey towards the emperor's court, for to fight and to do the battle with Guido, and Lodowick abode in Egypt in the stead of king Alexander. And upon the next morning came Lodowick, as though it had been king Alexander, and solemnly in the face of the Church married and spoused Alexander's wife, and held the feast and bridal with great royalty of delicate and precious meats, plenty of all manner wines, and divers melodies of instruments of music, and he made great joy and cheer to all the noblemen, and to all other people that there was assembled. And

when the night was come, he went to bed with the queen, and laid betwixt him and her a naked sword, whereof she had great wonder, but nothing she said ; and also he lay with her every night as long as Alexander was out.

The king Alexander, at the day that was prefixed and set, came unto the emperor, and said,

O most dread sovereign lord, it is so that I have left my father right sick. Nevertheless I am come to defend mine honour, and my foreword to perform.

The emperor said, *Ye do right well, and according to a noble man, and fortune shall favour you in your just and rightwise quarrel.*

And when the emperor's daughter understood that Alexander was comen, anon she sent for him ; and when as he was come to her she embraced him, and with joy and gladness she kissed him, and blessed the time that she might see him again, and demanded him where that he had left her friend and lover Lodowick. Then he showed and declared unto her all the process, and how he had left him king in his realm, and took his leave at her, and went into Lodowick's chamber ; and there was no creature that thought otherwise but it was Lodowick, only except Florentine. The next day following, afore Alexander went unto the battle, he said unto the emperor in the presence of Guido,

- My most redoubted sovereign lord, this Guido hath falsely and untruly accused me unto your noble grace, that I should be of such acquaintance with your daughter that should be unto the dishonour of your most noble person and hers; and unto that I swear and affirm by these Holy Evangelists, that she was never in any manner by me in such wise known as he hath to you alleged and informed, and that this day, with the aid and the help of God, I shall prove and make good upon his body!

Then said Guido, Yet once I say again, and swear by the Holy Evangelists, and by all that God hath made, that thou hast had knowledge, and hast defouled the emperor's daughter, and that I shall make good upon thy head!

Whereupon they leapt upon their coursers, and fiercely ran together with their spears, that they both brake and shivered in pieces; and they drew their swords, and fought long together, till at the last Alexander, with great might and strength, at one stroke smote off Guido's head, and sent it unto the emperor's daughter; whereof she was right glad, and bare it unto her father, and said,

Father, behold the head of him that you and me hath falsely defamed!

When that the emperor perceived the victory,

anon he sent for Alexander, whom that he believed had been Lodowick, and said,

O Lodowick, this day your honour and my daughter's ye have saved ; ye shall stand and be the more in my grace and favour, and whatsoever he be that hereafter more defame you, he shall for ever stand in my indignation. Alexander answered,

God helpeth and saveth them that trusteth in Him, and always wreaketh the blood undefective or innocent. But now, my most redoubted lord, of one thing I require you. At my departing from my father I left him sore sick ; that it will like you for to license me to go and see how it standeth with him, and if that it be anything amended I shall incontinent come again.

Then the emperor said, *That pleaseth me well ; but ye may in no manner wise leave me, for from henceforth I cannot be without your presence.*

Alexander took leave of the emperor, and bade him farewell, and rode again unto his realm ; whom when Lodowick saw, he made great cheer and gladness, and right friendly received him, and said,

O most true friend of all friends, tell me how ye have done and sped in your journey and need, and what end ye have brought it to. Then said he,

Go to the emperor, and serve him as ye have done tofore. I have gotten you more grace and favour of

him than ever ye have had afore time, and I have also smitten off the head of your enemy and adversary.

Then said Lodowick, *Ye have not only at this time saved my life, but many a time here afore, the which as yet I cannot deserve, but God reward you !*

And so departed and went again unto the emperor, and there was no man that knew of the absence of Alexander save only Lodowick. And whenas the night was come, he went to bed with the queen, and anon he had with her sweet and friendly words, and her embraced and kissed. Then said she,

Ye have made this time all too long that ye have not showed anything of friendship or love, how may this be ?

Then said he, *Wherefore say ye that ?* She said, *Every night as I was in my bed, ye have laid betwixt you and me a naked sword, and ye have never tasted or turned you towards me more than now.*

And when the king heard that, he thought on the truth of his fellow, and said unto her,

O my most dear lady and queen, it was not do for none evil will, but for a good probation and for a perpetual love.

But she thought in herself, *That love shall ye*

*nevermore have of me, but that despite she thought
I shall avenge upon thee !*

Then was there a knight that she afore had a little love and favour unto, and she began for to love him more and more, so long till at the last they thought and imagined how they might destroy and slay the king, and therefore they got poison and poisoned the king, so that if he had not been right strong of complexion he had died thereof; but it wrought in him so sore, that it caused him to be the most foul and horrible leper or lazarus that ever was seen upon earth. The lords and noblemen of his realm, and the queen also, seeing this despised him, and said that—*it behoved not a leper to reign upon us, for he should not procure nor engender any fair or clean heirs.*

And so he was deposed of the dignity royal, and driven out of his realm. In the mean time died the emperor of Rome, and Lodowick wedded the daughter; and, after that, Lodowick's father died, so that Lodowick reigned both emperor and king of France at once. When king Alexander heard that, he thought in himself,

*Now my fellow reigneth together upon the empire
and the realm of France, to whom may I better go
than to him, for whom many times I have adventured
my life ?*

And upon a night he rose up and made him ready, and took with him his staff and clapper, and yede toward the emperor's court; and when he was come nigh to the gate, he set him amongst other lazars abiding the giving of the alms. And on a season as the emperor went out of his palace, all the poor lazars began to ring their clappers, and the good king Alexander did like the other, but there was none alms given to them. He tarried so long unto the time that the emperor was set and served at the table; then went king Alexander unto the gate and knocked thereat, and the porter asked who was there. Alexander answered him,

I am a poor despised man, but for the love of God I require you that ye turn not your sight from my visage, and that ye will for the reward of God do my message unto the emperor!

He asked, *What is the matter?* Alexander said, *Go and tell him here is a lazar that right horrible is to see, the which prayeth him, for the love of God and king Alexander, that he will grant him this day to eat his alms afore him upon the earth in his hall.*

The porter said,

I wonder that ye dare desire that of my lord, for why, all the hall is full of lords and noblemen, and if they behold you they should all abhor and leave their meat. But for so much as ye have required me so

profoundly for the love of God, I shall go and do your errand, whatsoever happen thereof.

And so he yede forth afore the emperor, and did his message. When the emperor heard the porter name Alexander the king of Egypt, he said to the porter,

Go, bring him in afore me, how horrible that soever his visage be, and ordain him a place afore me, that he may eat his meat afore me in my presence.

The porter brought him in anon, and ordained him a place, and set him to meat afore the emperor ; and when he was well refreshed, he said unto one of the emperor's servants,

My dear friend, do me this errand to the emperor. Say unto him that I pray him, for the love of God and king Alexander, that he will send me his cup with wine. The servant said,

For the love of God I shall do it, but I believe it will not be, for if ye once drink of my lord's cup, he will no more drink of the same.

Nevertheless he did the errand. Anon as the emperor heard him name king Alexander, he commanded his cup to be filled of the best wine, and—

Bear it unto him !

The which wine when he had received it, he put it into his bottle, and took his ring that Lodowick

had given unto him, and put it into the cup and sent it again unto the emperor; and when the emperor saw the ring, anon he knew that it was the same that he had given unto Alexander in friendship, when he departed from him, and thought in his heart that—

Alexander is dead, or else this man is marvellously come unto the ring;

and commanded anon that the lazar should not depart until that time he had spoken with him; for in no wise he could have knowledge of him, nor yet reputed him for Alexander. After that the dinner was done and ended, the emperor took the sick man apart, and asked how he came by the ring. Alexander demanded if he knew well the ring. The emperor said, *I know it right well.* Alexander said, *Wot ye also to whom ye have given it?* The emperor said, *I wot right well.*

How is it then, said Alexander, that ye know not me? for I am Alexander, to whom ye have given the same ring.

When the emperor heard that, he fell down to the ground for sorrow, and tare and rent his robes and clothes, and with great sighings and bewailings said,

O Alexander, ye be the one half of my soul! Where is your goodly and delicate body that was so fair, that now so unclean and wretchedly is infected?

He answered,

This is me happened for the great fidelity that ye have done to me in my bed with my wife, when ye laid a naked sword betwixt you and her; wherefore she became wroth and hated me, that she, and a knight that aforetime she ought her love unto, have empoisoned me, as ye may see, and above that they have driven me out of my realm.

And when the emperor heard that, he for love took him about the neck, and kissed him, and said,

O my most entirely beloved brother, I sorrow to see you in this great sickness and misery; would God I might die for you! But, my most dear friend, suffer patiently a little time, till that we have sent for all the physicians and wise masters in physic, to have their counsel and advice if there be any remedy or hope of recovering of your health; and, if it be possible for to help you, we shall neither spare empire, lordships, nor other goods temporal, to make you whole and sound.

In the meanwhile he was brought unto a fair chamber, richly apparelled and appointed of all manner things that were requisite and necessary for his ease and health. And in all haste he sent his messengers by all parts of the world, for the expert

and most wise physicians that might be found. Of whom within a month were come and assembled before the emperor thirty, the which were right expert and subtle in that science; to whom the emperor said,

My well beloved masters, I have a friend that grievously is infected with a leprosy, whom I would right fain were healed and made sound; and nothing thereon to spare, neither gold, ne silver, ne all the other goods that I have in this world, but I would give it to recover his health. The masters answered and said,

All that ever is possible to be done by physic, that ye shall soon understand, after that we have seen the person.

And forthwith, as they had seen him and perceived the cause and matter of the infirmity, they judged it a disease incurable for all the masters living; and when the emperor heard that, he was right sorry in his heart, and remitted it unto the help of Almighty God, calling unto him religious men, and poor people, and other devout persons, and desired them to pray to God, that He would vouchsafe to make whole his friend the sooner for their good deeds and prayers; and he himself, with many other, fasted and prayed to Almighty God for the health of his friend.

Upon a day, as King Alexander was in his prayers, there came unto him a voice, saying,

If the emperor will with his own hands slay his two sons, which his wife hath borne by him at one burden, and wash thy body with the blood of them, thy body and thy flesh shall be as fair and as clean as the flesh of the little children. When King Alexander had heard this, he thought in himself,

This vision is not expedient to be showed; for it is sore against nature that any man should slay his own sons for the recovering of the health of a strange man.

The emperor night and day lay in his prayers with great devotion, and prayed to God for the remedy of King Alexander. So that at the last there came a voice unto him and said,

How long shall ye thus cry and call upon me, when it is openly showed and notified unto Alexander how that he shall be made whole? The emperor, hearing that, went unto Alexander and said,

Of all friends the best and most true, blessed be the most high God, the which never faileth that call and trust upon Him. Of Whom I have knowledge, that it is showed unto you how and in what wise that ye be made whole; wherefore I pray you that ye will it openly show unto me, that we may joy together; and if ye need anything thereto that I may do, I shall fulfil

it unto my power, and for your health give all that I have. Alexander said,

Sir, I dare not show to you how that I may be cured or healed of my malady, for it exceedeth, and it is a thing against nature for to be done; therefore I will not show it to you, howbeit great trust and confidence is in you. The emperor said,

Alexander, trust in me! For whatsoever is possible for to be done for the recovering of your health, I shall do it, and therefore hide nothing from me.

Then said Alexander, *I have of God knowledge that if ye will slay your two sons with your own hands, and wash me in their blood, I should be whole; and therefore I have not showed it unto you, for methinketh it is against nature that the father should slay his own children for the health of a strange man.* The emperor said,

Say not that ye be a strange man, for I love you as I do myself; and, therefore, if I had ten children I should not spare one alive to have your health.

After that the emperor watched and spied his time, when the empress and all ladies and chamberers were out of the way, and when time was, he entered into the chamber whereas the children slept, and drew out his knife, and cut asunder both their throats, and gathered the blood in a vessel, and therein he bathed and washed Alexander; and

when he was so bathed, his body and flesh was as fair and as clean as though it had been of a young child. Then the emperor had knowledge of his visage, and kissed him, saying,

O good Alexander, now I see you in the same form which I have oftentimes delighted in ! Blessed be God that ever I had those children by the whom ye be holpen and made whole !

And yet wist no man of the death of the children, save only the emperor and Alexander. And when as the emperor saw that Alexander was perfectly healed, he said unto him,

I shall ordain to you an honest company, and ye shall go from hence ten mile ; the next day send unto me a messenger, and that ye show openly unto me of your coming, and I shall then with all solemnity come and meet you, and ye shall abide with me unto the time that we may otherwise provide for the recovering of your realm.

This counsel pleased Alexander right well, and according to the same it was done. For on the next day came the messenger unto the emperor, showing him the coming of King Alexander, and when the empress heard that, she was right glad, and said unto the emperor,

O my lord, have ye not now a cause of great joy, that King Alexander, whom we of a long time have

not seen? And if it please you to go and meet him with your lords and servants, I shall follow you with my ladies and gentlewomen.

And yet wist she not the death of her children. Then rode they forth with a great company, and met with the King Alexander; and when they met together, with great reverence and honour they received him, and with great gladness and joy they brought him into the palace. And when the time of dinner was come, Alexander was set at the table betwixt the emperor and the empress, and all the cheer that she could make she did to him, and when the emperor perceived that, he was right well pleased, and said,

O my own Florentine, I joy above all things that ye do and make to King Alexander so good cheer!

Then said she,

Wherefore should I not? Is not his coming to us both joy and gladness? But more to you, my lord; for this dignity that ye are in by him ye are promoted, and many times he hath saved you from the death.

The emperor said then,

I pray you, mine own Florentine, that ye will take heed to my words that I shall say to you. Saw ye not the foul lazar which the last day sat before our table, and prayed me for the love of God and King Alexander that I should give him drink? She said,

My lord, I saw him well; a more horrible man I never beheld! Then said the emperor,

I demand now this of you: I put case that he were King Alexander, and that he in anywise could not be made whole but with the blood of your sons, the which ye in one day brought into this world, would ye not that their blood were shed, that he might bathe himself therein, to the intent that by the same he might have perfect health as ye now see him in?

She said,

My lord, wherefore demand ye me that question? I say, and let you have knowledge for truth, that if I had ten sons I should gladly slay them with mine own hands, to prepare and ordain for him a bain, and should wash him therein mine own self, rather than I should leave him in such peril; for God might well send us more children, but such a true friend were as a thing impossible for us to recover or find.

When the emperor heard this of her, he was well content and pleased in his mind, and said,

O wife, had ye liever have your children dead than Alexander should be in the sickness of leprosy? Therefore shall I open and show to you now the truth of the matter. The foul lazar, the which ye saw, was Alexander that sitteth here, and by that manner he is made whole, with the blood of our sons, and they are dead.

As the empress heard that, she began to sorrow, as nature would, although she had said afore that she had liever see her children dead than she would suffer Alexander in such pain. The nurses of the children, understanding this, with great crying and weeping went to the nursery or chamber of them, and great sorrow and bewailing was made through the emperor's court for his sons. And when the nurses came into the chamber, they found the children playing, and singing of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary: AVE MARIA! GRATIA PLENA, DOMINUS TECUM! And then went they again in all haste unto the emperor, and showed him that his sons were living, and that

about their throats there as they were cut they have a circle of thread of gold,

and thereof was great joy and gladness in all the court, and gave thankings unto Almighty God, and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, His mother, of that great miracle.

After that, the emperor, with a great multitude and company of people gathered and assembled, went with Alexander into Egypt, and set him again into his royalty and possession of his realm, and the queen with the knight, which lived together in avoutrie, he did them both to be brent into powder. And when this was all done, the emperor had a sister

only, whom he gave Alexander unto his wife. And when King Alexander had all his realm obtained again, and was set in good rest and peace, the emperor went again unto his empire, and the King Alexander right wisely and manly governed himself in all his feats and acts, so that he overcame all his enemies and rebels.

And when he was in all his glory, peace, and might, he had thought and mind upon his father and mother, by whom he was cast into the sea, which dwelled in far parts from thence. He sent to them a messenger, and did them to have knowledge that the King of Egypt upon such a day would be with them to eat, and to drink, and make good cheer; and when the messenger was come to them they received him with great joy, and with gifts largely to him given sent him again, saying that their services should be ready at all times to do the king pleasure, but that could they never by power fully deserve that he would vouchsafe to show them the honour, whereto they were not worthy, he for to come to them to eat, and to drink and to sport him. The messenger went again unto the king, and showed how gladly that they would receive him, and what reward they had given him, and how faithfully they were ready to do him service at his commandment, wherewith the king was

well content. And when the day was come that was prefixed, the king with a fair company rode toward his father's house, the which, as well to the knight his father as to his mother, was unknown that he was their son. When the king was come nigh unto his father's castle, the knight rode to receive and meet him ; and when he came nigh unto the king, he descended from his horse and revered him with his knee on the earth ; but the king took him up shortly, and commanded him to ascend again upon his horse, and rode so together cheek by cheek unto the castle. And when they were come thither, the mother came them to meet, and fell upon her knees to the earth, and welcomed him gladly. The king took her lovingly up, and kissed her right friendly, and she said,

My most honourable lord, ye do unto us unworthy great honour with the presence of your person most honourable, the which we never more can deserve.

After that all the meat was all ready, and the time of the day was come to go to dinner, the father came with a basin and with an ewer, and the mother with a towel, saying, *Sire, all thing is ready ; please it you to wash ?*

And when the king saw that, he smiled, and said unto himself,

Now is the song of the nightingale true ; for my

father and my mother should gladly fulfil as I said, if that I myself would thereto consent, and suffer them to do it.

But he would not suffer them for to do to him such service, saying, *Your age is for to be honoured and worshipped, and therefore I will not of it,* and called unto him one of his servants, the which served him thereof. Then said the knight,

Ye will not suffer us to do it for our honour, for we are not worthy thereto ! The king said,

Have not I said that for your age I forbear you it ?

When the king was set at the table, he set his mother on the right hand of him, and his father on his left side, and they as much as they might beheld his visage and countenance. The dinner ended, the king entered into a chamber, and made the knight with his lady to come in to him, and commanded all others to avoid and go out ; and when they were thus alone, the king said unto them,

Have ye no children ? They answered, *We have neither son nor daughter.*

And the king said, *Had ye never none ?*

The knight answered, *We have had one son, but he is long agoe dead.*

The king asked, *Of what death died he ?* The knight said, *A natural death.*

Then said the king, *If I may otherwise know that he died, then are ye found with a default.*

Then asked the knight, *My lord, wherefore enquire ye thus after our son?*

The king answered, *That do I not without cause, and therefore I will know of what death he died, and if ye will not tell me, I shall cause you to die a shameful death.*

When they heard that, they fell to ground upon their knees before him, and asked him mercy and forgiveness of their lives. The king would not suffer them to kneel, but shortly took them up, and said,

To that intent came I not into your house, to eat your bread and to betray you, but say me the truth and ye shall be saved. For it is given me to understand that ye have put him to death, and if that come in judgment, ye must die a shameful death.

Then said the knight, *Lord, pardon me my life, and I shall show you the very truth.* The king said, *Fear not, for I shall do you no harm.* Then said he,

Sovereign lord, we had a son only, that was wise, and lettered, and right well understood. And upon a time, as he stood afore us and served at the table, there came a nightingale that right sweetly sung; whose song he began to interpret

and tell us what it meant, and said,—This bird singeth that I shall become so great and mighty a lord that it shall be to your honour and advancement, in such wise that ye my father shall be glad to hold the basin with water to wash in my hands, and my mother the towel, if that I would suffer it. And when I heard that I was sore moved, and took and cast him into the sea for to drown. Then said the king,

What evil might have come to you if he had been made so great and mighty? Methinketh it should have been your honour and profit. The knight said,

Lord, it was no reason, but a wodeness. The king answered,

That was a great foolishness of you, that ye would do against the ordinance and will of God! But now ye shall know for truth that I am your son that ye cast into the sea, and God of His great mercy and goodness hath saved me, and by His grace hath brought me to this estate and dignity.

And the father and mother hearing that, with fear and joy replenished, fell flat to the ground, whom he lovingly and friendly took up, saying,

Fear not, but rather be glad and joyous, for ye shall nothing suffer, but my exaltation shall be your glory, and joy, and profit; and kissed both his father

and mother with great joy and gladness. Then began the mother to weep. Then said the king,

Weep not, but be of good cheer; for in my realm ye shall be honoured above me during my life; and took them with him into his realm, where they dwelled together in honour and joy, and ended their days with joy and mirth.

FULGENCIUS.

(From the 'Gesta Romanorum.')

UNDER the general head of romance it is not improper to treat of the 'Gesta Romanorum,' a book which has perhaps kept its vitality longer than any of the other mediæval works of a similar nature. This fact is to be attributed to the free use which has been made of its contents by later writers, many of our own dramatists and poets having taken thence, either the entire subjects of plays and poems, or hints for the introduction of incidental matter. It would be easy, were it needful or desirable, to give a tolerably long list of such productions as may be traced to this monkish compilation, but to do no more than cite two striking instances, Parnell's tale of the 'Hermit' is taken almost literally in its detail from the 80th chapter, while of late Mr. Morris has in his 'Earthly Paradise' made frequent resort to the book.

As to its origin, there has been so much controversy, since Warton, in his 'History of Poetry,' first

revived in later days the name and memory of what had once been so popular, that it would be idle to attempt more than a statement of the conjectures which have been put forward as to the probable date and authorship of the '*Gesta Romanorum*.' All commentators are unanimous in assigning the collection to some period between the beginning of the thirteenth and the middle of the fourteenth centuries, and this period is by Mr. Douce narrowed to the hundred years or so after 1256; but even he found himself unable more definitely to fix the date, and the nearest approach to identification is still involved in the question—Who collected the material? That labour is said to have been carried out by one Pierre Bercheur, a Poitevin, and prior of the Benedictine monastery of St. Eloi in Paris, about the year 1362; and although this supposition has been combated by not a few since Warton, on the authority of a contemporary theologian of Saxe Gotha, first adopted it, no more plausible theory has hitherto been put forth.

For ordinary purposes, therefore, Bercheur may be considered the man to whom we are indebted for the best story-book that ever was written. At all events, the author was undoubtedly an ecclesiastic, and compiled the book as a sort of

storehouse to which preachers might go for the anecdotes with which in the manner of parables they used to enliven their discourses, and instruct the hearers whom they most likely would have failed equally to interest or to instruct by mere sermons. Not at all particular as to the origin of his examples, he took impartially the Eastern stories which reached Europe—either by way of Constantinople, or brought by the returning Crusaders—the historical episodes of classic times, the marvels related by early philosophers, the acts of the saints, and the current traditions of folklore, and having transcribed them with no arrangement of any kind, and appended to each chapter a moralisation of its contents, always quaint, often telling, and occasionally very beautiful in its application, he named the whole ‘*Gesta Romanorum*.’

It is needless to say that the book has little or nothing to do with the deeds of the Romans, whose writers, it is true, are freely quoted as authorities, but of whose history wild work is made when incidents therefrom are to be related. The question of authorship is complicated not a little by the fact that there may not improbably have been two similar books, bearing the same title, and to some extent common in their contents,

one of them being an imitation of the other. To this hypothesis, Mr. Douce, who thoroughly examined the subject, inclined very strongly, and his arguments have never yet been upset, notwithstanding the remarks of Mr. Swan, who edited the larger work in 1824. The fact remains that out of the 102 stories contained in what Mr. Douce called the 'English Gesta,' upwards of forty are entirely different from any among the 181 or 152 which are in the several editions of what he has denominated the 'Original Gesta,' viz. the work attributed to Pierre Bercheur, and analysed by Warton. Of these, the tale of Fulgencius here given is one of the best. As far as can be ascertained, this smaller collection has never yet been printed as a whole, although it exists, both wholly and in part, among the Harleian MSS.; a selection from it has, however, been very popular since Wynkyn de Worde first published the undated English version of which but one copy is now known, that in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge. This was the original of the numerous editions which up to the beginning of the eighteenth century were put forward, in a greater or less degree amended and altered according to the taste of the time. As the example given is selected from this lesser work, I will not dwell at any great length upon the par-

particulars connected with the preservation of the original 'Gesta.'

Briefly, they are as follows. Manuscripts of the book exist in no known library, but printed copies are sufficiently common. The date of the first Latin edition cannot be fixed, as neither of the first three folios bears the year of publication, and only one of them the locality, Utrecht. These, however, are very rare; they contain only 152 chapters. Increased by twenty-nine stories, the first of which is the original of 'Pericles, Prince of Tyre,' the book was printed again and again, and in most instances with full particulars of publication. A folio copy, in an imperfect state, is in the British Museum Library, which may have been printed towards the close of the fifteenth century. One edition only is known of the German translation, and of the Dutch there are two, of which the earlier was printed at Gouda, the very town of Erasmus, who objected so strongly to the pulpit use of 'Gesta Romanorum.' An anonymous French version of 149 of the original chapters, also exists under the name of 'Le Violier des Hystoires Rommaines.' The only English translation was published in the year 1824 by the Rev. Charles Swan, but is not satisfactory; the editor assumed to himself the liberty of omitting the greater portion

of most of the morals, and seems to have looked upon his task as affording a good opportunity for polemics, the result being that the application is often unintelligible, and that there are too frequently recurring offences against taste. However, no translation has as yet appeared to supersede this.

It has been already mentioned that 'Fulgencius' is taken from the English 'Gesta.' But, although not to be found in the 'Original Gesta,' it is so good an example of the best kind of these parables, that there seemed none which might more fittingly be chosen. The story itself has been a favourite in one form or another from so early a date, that its origin in truth, or in the imagination of some romancer, can only be surmised. It may have been brought from Asia, and the occurrence of a similar story in the Arabic version of the 'Seven Wise Masters' makes for this supposition; but it must have been brought very early, possibly by the Moors, as two different versions may be traced to Spain and to Portugal respectively. Before the year 1236, when he died, Comsi, prior of the monastery of Soissons, related it in his 'Contes dévots,' abstracts of which are to be found in M. Le Grand d'Aussy's *Fabliaux*. In this account the boy's delivery is rather clumsily effected by a

special miracle, and he, with the king his master and the king's son, become hermits. Otherwise the incidents are nearly identical, as they are, in a still greater degree, in the Spanish version of Timoneda, which forms the seventeenth chapter of 'El Discreto Tertuliente,' and to which no doubt reference is made by Minsheu in his edition of Percivale's Spanish Grammar, published in 1623. In an altered form the story reappears among the legends of the saints, as an episode in the life of St. Elizabeth, wife of Dionysius, a fourteenth-century king of Portugal, and niece to the more celebrated St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Here jealousy takes the place of insulted pride as the cause of the horrible doom to which the king sends his vassal, and it was very likely from this legend that Schiller took the idea of 'Fridolin,' the poem by which this tale has become best known to modern readers. That ballad, acknowledged as it is to be one of the author's finest efforts, has more than once or twice been translated into English; but like all German ballads it seems to lose force in these translations, as if our modern English diction would not give the effect of the original idiom, which might perhaps be better reproduced in the Lowland Scotch. Schiller's poem soon found its way to the continental stage, and in a

dramatised form became extremely popular ; possibly the present want of any English dramatist may account for our having no play on the subject. Bernard Weber, chapel-master at Berlin, also composed music for this, as for many other of Schiller's works, and the story has been illustrated by Retsch in a series of outline engravings.

The history of *Fulgencius* as here given follows the version in a beautiful manuscript on vellum, of the time of Henry VI., which is preserved in the Harleian collection. It is now printed for the first time, as being superior to that which is to be found in the ordinary seventeenth-century editions of the '*Gesta Romanorum*,' although its diction is somewhat more antiquated.

FULGENCIUS.

LAMARTIUS reigned emperor in the city of Rome, and he held in household with him the son of his brother, whom he much loved, and the name of that child was Fulgencius, and every day he ministered to the emperor of drink. And in the same time there was in the same place a steward, that was steward of all the empire, and he was his eme, and he had great envy of this child that the emperor loved him so much, and therefore he studied night and day how that he might make discord between the emperor and this child. So in a certain time, when the steward perceived the emperor in chamber, and arraying him to bed, he went to him and said,

Sir, my lord, I have a certain counsel to show between you and me. Say, quoth the emperor, for here be none but we two. Then said the steward, Sir, this child Fulgencius, that is your cousin, and that ye love so much, foully defameth you in all the empire, saying that ye be infect with infirmity of

lepra, insomuch that he may not for stench that cometh from you stand by you when that he bringeth you drink, and therefore when he cometh to you with drink, soothly, as soon as he hath take you drink he turneth away his head.

When the emperor heard these words he was not a little grieved, and blew upon the steward, praying him to tell him the sooth, whether he had any savour of lepra or no. Then said the steward, *Nay, sir, by my good life, for ye have as sweet a sond as any man of the empire.* Then said the lord, *How may I come to the sooth-fastness in this case, and see the falseness of this boy?* Sir, quoth he, *and I shall tell you; not but behold well the next time that he shall serve you of drink, be it at meat or in chamber, and ye shall see that as soon as he hath take you the cup, as soon he will turn away his head that he will not feel your savour, and thus may ye well prove that it is sooth that I say.* Thou sayest sooth, quoth the emperor, *there may be no better proof.*

Soon after, the steward went to the child Fulgencius and took him to a wall, and said, *Dear friend, thou art, as thou sayest and knowest well, nigh sib to my lord, for he is thine eme and thou art his cousin, and, son, if thou wilt couth me good thanks, I shall warn thee of a fault that thou hast whereby my lord*

is highly evil apaid, and it troubleth him so much, that he is oftentime in purpose to put thee out of his palace, and he shameth to speak to thee of the matter.

Then said Fulgencius, *Now, sir, for His love that died on the cross, tell me what fault it is that my lord despiseth my company for, and I am ready to amend it, and do after good counsel!* Then said the steward, *Thou hast an evil and a stinking breath, insomuch that my lord thinketh ever when that thou bringest the cup to him that he would cast it in thy face, he feeleth so foul a stench of thee when thou comest with the cup.*

Then said Fulgencius, *Sir, I beseech you heartily to tell me some good counsel and help in this case.* Then said the steward, *If thou wilt do after my counsel in this case, I shall bring all to good end.* Yes, sir, said he, *that I desire now before all things.* Then said the steward, *As oft time as thou bringest the cup to him, and hast delivered it to him, then turn thy face from him, that he feel no stench of thee, and do thus till time that we have ordained some medicine for thee.*

Fulgencius trowed him well and all his words, and said that he would do his counsel. So in time that he ministered the cup to the emperor, and had y-taken it into his hands, anon he turned his

visage from him. When the emperor saw that, he was no little evil apaid; he lift up his foot and gave him a spurn against the breast, and said, *Fie on thee, ribald! for now I see well it is true that I have heard of thee! Go out of my sight, for thou shalt none longer abide with me!* Fulgencius wept and made much sorrow, and the emperor called to him the steward, and said, *What is thy best counsel? Tell me how I shall best be venged on this brothell, that he were out of this world, that hath thus defamed me.*

Yes, sir, quoth the steward, I can tell you well enow. Sir, quoth he, ye have, here beside, men that haveth great plenty of fire for stones to be brent in your lime-pits. And ye, sir, sendeth to them a message this same night, to bid them to burn him in their fires that shall come first to them on the morrow and say to them,—Have ye done the commandment of my lord?—and that they do so on pain of death. And, sir, ye shall say to Fulgencius over night, that he rise on the morrow, go to your workmen, and say to them,—Have ye not done my lord's commandment?—And then they shall by your commandment take him and cast him in the fire, and thus by this way he shall have an evil death.

The emperor called to him Fulgencius, and said, *I charge thee on pain of aeath that thou rise up to-*

morrow, and go hence three miles to my workmen, whereas they brenneth stones, and ask of them if that they have done my commandment, and else tell them that they shall be dead.

Fulgencius set all his thoughts to speed his errand, and for to rise betimes on the morrow. In the meantime, the emperor had sent out in the night a yeoman upon an horse to the workmen, that he should charge them to be early up. And if there come any such man to them, and said that his lord asketh of them if that they have done his commandment, that they on pain of death take him and cast him in the fire-pit, and burn him to bones. *We be ready, quoth they, to do this deed readily.* The messenger turned him again, and told the emperor that it should be done. On the morrow, Fulgencius rose up and made him ready to do his errand, and thought none evil, and forth he went without tarrying in any place, till time that he heard a bell ring at a church, and turned in and heard mass. And soon after the elevation there came upon him such a slumbering that he might not forbear, but he must needs sleep. And he slept a great while so savourly, that the priest ne none other might find in their heart to wake him. In the meantime the steward had great desire to know how that it stood with him, and he came

to the workmen, and said, *Sirs, have ye not do the commandment of my lord, that ye wot of? No, forsooth*, quoth they, *but we will now begin!* And anon they set hands on him; and he looked and raved and cried out, *What will ye do! Nolite, Nolite! (Do not so, do not so!) for my lord bade it should be Fulgencius! ye will be lorn for me, let me go!* Then said they, *That told he not to us, but he sent to us and said that we should take him that come first to us, and that said,—Have ye done my lord's commandment?—that we should, on pain of death, take him and fling him in our oven; and since thou say that thou shalt have none other grace than as we say.* And so they took him and brent him to bones.

Soon after Fulgencius was waked, and come to them, and said this, *My lord asketh if ye have done his precept and his bidding.* Yea, quoth they, *a little afore thee was it done. I pray you at the clemency of God, telleth me what the commandment was!* Forsooth! quoth they, *we were charged that we should take him that come first to us on the morrow, and said the word that thyself hast said, and cast him in the fire, and burn him to powder. And for the steward come first to us, and said the same words, therefore we have brenned him.* When Fulgencius heard these words, he wist well that

falsehood and traying had been used, and he thanked God that so saved him. He took his leave of the workmen, and went home to the palace.

When the emperor saw him he had great marvel, and said, *Thou wast not this day at my workmen, and said to them as I said to thee ! Yes, sir, he said, and I was there, and they had done it ere that I came to them. How so ?* quoth the emperor. *Sir, for the steward was there before me, and said,—Is not my lord's will done ?—and for he said those words, they took him and cast him in their fires, and so if I had come afore him it should have been done to me. And therefore I thank highly my God that thus hath saved me from death.* Then said the emperor to him, *By the oath that thou hast made to me, tell me the sooth of that I shall ask thee. Sir, quoth the child, I trow that ye found never falsehood in me yet, and therefore I have great marvel in my spirits why that ye ordained such a death for me, and I am your own brother's son ?* Son, quoth the emperor, *it is no marvel, and that thou shalt well see thyself, by that I shall ask of thee ; for I ordained to thee that death at counsel of the steward, by cause that thou defamest me in all the empire, and hast told that I was infect with lepra, and thereof come from me so abominable stench that no man might feel it, and in*

token thereof thou turnedst away from me thy head when thou broughtest me the cup. And for I saw this with mine een, therefore I ordained such a death, and yet will ordain for thee, but thou can the better excuse thee !

Then said Fulgencius, *Sir, if it like you, heareth what I shall say, and ye shall hear a foul conspiracy and traying, that ye never heard such one before. The steward that is now dead come to me, and said that ye said to him, that my breath stank so foul that it was despite to you my presence. And therefore he counselled me that I should, when I brought you the cup, turn away my head ; I take God to witness that it is no lesing that I say unto you !*

The emperor gave good credence to his word, and said,

Ah, dear friend, the steward is fallen in his own ditch by the right wisdom of God, this false ordinance had he made for envy that he had to thee. Son, be a good man, for thou art much bounden to God, that thus hath kept thee from death.

MORALITY.

Dear friends, this emperor may be called a prelate of holy Church. Fulgencius is called a Christian man chosen, which is set all under discipline of the

prelate, for he doeth to minister and offer to the prelate the cup or tithing of all new gotten goods that he hath, by the which prelates and men of holy Church should live. Fulgencius, or the good Christian man that is the minister to God and the prelate, is much loved of God and well rewarded. But the steward is envious at it, or every wicked man, that be members of the devil, as is Cain. Such men oftentimes turneth the hefts of true Christian men, saying that the prelate is smitten with lepra, and neither pleasing to God ne to man. And that is against holy Scripture. And such wicked men oftime accuseth the true people to the magistrate by falsehood, and such men at the last been ycast into everlasting fire. And the true people shall go into everlasting bliss, and be saved from the foul death of hell, from the which death He keep us that with his blood bought us, and bring us to His bliss that none shall miss. Amen.

SIR URRE OF HUNGARY.

(From the 'Mort d'Arthur.')

SO much has been said, and said so well by some, upon the subject of the 'Mort d'Arthur' as a whole, that it seems almost superfluous here to speak of the many noble qualities of that book of books, almost impertinent in this age of small interests and things to praise that greatest outcome of a truer and better day. But of the tale here given I may, I hope, speak without offence. It has been unaccountably passed over by all those great men who have in later times tried to reproduce for us the court of Arthur; yet there is in all the book no story possessing more beauty, more feeling, or greater dramatic power. I choose it chiefly for three reasons: in the first place, it is my own favourite, and I think it wants knowing only to be first in common esteem; in the second, it is interesting, as giving the most perfect list attainable of the names of Arthur's men, and as being the final wind-up of that most

wonderful history of the Round Table, before treachery wrought the undoing of all; lastly, this tale gives the best insight into the character of Launcelot, the real hero of 'Mort d'Arthur.'

And it is upon this third reason that we must dwell. Launcelot, be he actual man, or mere embodiment of idea, is the most perfectly human portraiture of living, acting manhood that has ever been given to the world. By no means perfect, but by all means a man such as a man might love, and serve for love's sake. Most loyal to his friend in deed—witness his succour of his fellow, Sir Kay the Seneschal; most loyal to his king—even in thought and desire; but the cruel, compelling flesh overmastered the spirit, as was ever the case with men when the wild blood got the better of the will. Tender, and delicate, and courteous as becomes a gentleman, such as may fit with Chaucer's definition—with his wife Elaine, and with his love Elaine, with Gareth, and with Nereous de l'Isle, with Tristram, and even with Meliagraunce. Not too far above us to win our love. In reading of Galahad and of Percivale, one does not weep for their deaths; they were little sympathetic with us, a little too pure; men by all means to be revered, and talked of as worthy, but hardly of our own earthly make.

But the heart of man goes forth to meet Launcelot, so strong in arms, so sweet and wise in counsel, so true in love, so hard-trying in his agony of unavailing repentance; we feel with him in his strength, and in his weakness, as we feel with a brother; and when, all his troubles done, and the kind hand of death having clasped his strong right hand, he dies, smiling in his sleep, is there any man who, knowing all his story, would willingly read aloud those last words of Bors de Ganis: 'And now I dare say—that, Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, thou wert never matched of none earthly knight's hands. And thou wert the courteste knight that ever bare shield. And thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou wert the truest lover, of a sinful man, that ever loved woman. And thou wert the kindest man that ever struck with sword. And thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights. And thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies. And thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest!'

We may perhaps be spared the vexation of having our ideal British knight taken from us by the commentators, and resolved into a mere

impersonation of the Dawn, or the Sun, or other such like uninteresting phenomena ; and no one has yet, to the best of my knowledge, proved him to be a Western rendering of any unknown Eastern hero. So it is worth while clinging to Launcelot du Lac, as our succour from the club of utter Philistinism, and the cold venom of philosophy. A little consideration of this special story may not be amiss. In the end of all things, of all that noble time when Arthur and his knights succoured down-trodden folk for love's sake, the last pleasant tale is told of all that great assemblage. The Holy Grail has been won at last, and Galahad, Launcelot's only-begotten son, lies crowned and dead in the spiritual city of Sarras, having by his acts won for his father that renown, which his father by cause of sin might not win for himself. Then Launcelot came back to Camelot, and fell again to the old love, and the old sin, and in his innocent, single-hearted treachery, trusting too much to the honour of others, fell into the snares, if not of his own familiar friend, still of those who were Gawaine's brethren. So the end came. But before that sorrowful ending, before Arthur and his knights fell, and Guinevere left silk and pall for her nun's habit ; and before Launcelot's great heart broke ; it was needful to show how

this man, erring, but strong to follow the right, was beloved of Heaven ; and how he, being a true man, suffered more chastisement through the loving grace of God than ever came to him in cell or chapel, when, utterly broken down in spirit, the strong remorseful heart recognised the ineffable tenderness of Heaven, and felt its own unworthiness. Is there in all history, or in all saintly record, a truer human touch than is expressed in those few words—‘ And ever Sir Launcelot wept, as he had been a child that had been beaten ’ ?

Somehow or other, this particular story has either been altogether neglected by the minstrels or else their versions of it have perished ; for it occurs nowhere but in Sir Thomas Mallory. It may have existed in his time elsewhere than in ‘ the French book,’ for he tells us that he passed over whole books of the adventures of Launcelot, specifying them as being of his ‘ deeds, when he was called *le Chevalier du Chariot*.’ Now the earliest known metrical romance on the subject is ‘ *La Charette*,’ begun by Chrestien de Troyes, and continued by Geoffroy de Ligny in the twelfth century ; and to this romance, or to some kindred prose version, he may be presumed to refer. As we at present have the poem, it deals

only with the actual adventure of the cart, when Guinevere lay in durance at the hands of Sir Meliagraunce; but perhaps there may once have been more of it. On this point, however, it were idle to speculate; the fact remains, that in no poem, old or new, in no other prose than the 'Mort d'Arthur' of Mallory, and in no branch of kindred art, have we any rendering of the history of 'Sir Urre of Hungary.'

It may be well briefly to mention the romances, metrical and in prose, which bear on the life of Launcelot. 'La Charette' has already been noticed. Its origin was probably the prose romance of 'Launcelot du Lac,' compiled in the twelfth century by Walter Mapes, Archdeacon of Oxford, at the wish of Henry II. This latter work, presumably the original of all that followed, was written in Norman French, and has been more than once printed.

There are three Parisian editions, dated respectively 1494, 1513, and 1533, of which the first and last are most in esteem. Other two metrical romances exist, both in English, and both apparently derived from the same source. The earlier of the two, the date of which may be referred to about 1500, is in the University Library at Cambridge, and has twice been edited, first in

1839, by Joseph Stevenson, Esq., for the Maitland Club; secondly, by the Rev. W. W. Skeat, for the 'Early English Text Society,' in 1845. This is in the heroic measure, and deals with merely incidental parts of Launcelot's history. The other exists among the Harleian MSS. (No. 2252) and is better known as being that selected by Mr. Ellis for description in his 'Early English Prose Romances.' It is in octo-syllabic ballad measure, and under the general title of 'Le Morte Arthur' gives the histories of the Maid of Astolat, of the impugning of Queen Guinevere by Sir Mador de la Port, and of the final ending of Arthur, of Guinevere, and of Launcelot. It was printed and presented by Thomas Ponton, Esq., to the Roxburghe Club in 1819.

The manuscript Dutch poem, in the Royal Library of the Hague appears to be only a metrical rendering of Walter Mapes; it dates from the thirteenth century, and was in 1846 printed at the Government expense, under the editing of Dr. Jonckbloet, who has prefixed an essay of some length on its origin. Then, in prose, there are reprints of certain portions of Launcelot's history in the 'Bibliothèque bleue,' a series of reproductions of the matter of old French romances, which appeared some ten years since, and for which

we have to thank M. Alfred Delvan. These would seem to comprise the principal early records, and for worthy commemoration of Sir Launcelot, we must skip some five centuries, and come down to our own time. Of late years poets have delighted to honour the great knight, and Mr. Tennyson, Mr. Morris, and, *longo intervallo*, Lord Lytton, have all told of him. Yet, none of the three have dealt with this, the sweetest and noblest episode of all his varied career; and surely either Mr. Tennyson or Mr. Morris might have given us a worthy rendering of it. It may be that these two were too true poets, and could not persuade themselves to alter in any way the old poetic words of the old maker. Thus, then, in the wording of Caxton, I present this fragment of his tale, of whom reading, Francesca looked upon Paolo and he upon her, and—let herself speak:—

Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante.

SIR URRE OF HUNGARY.

THERE was a good knight in the land of Hungary, whose name was Sir Urre, and he was an adventurous knight ; and in all places where he might hear of any deeds of worship, there would he be. So it happened in Spain, there was an earl's son the which hight Alphegus, and at a great tournament in Spain, this Sir Urre, Knight of Hungary, and Sir Alphegus of Spain encountered together for very envy, and so either undertook other to the uttermost. And by fortune Sir Urre slew Sir Alphegus, the earl's son of Spain. But this knight that was slain had given Sir Urre, or ever he was slain, seven great wounds—three on the head, and four on the body and upon his left hand. And this Sir Alphegus had a mother which was a great sorceress. And she for the despite of her son's death, wrought by her subtile crafts that Sir Urre should never be whole, but ever his wounds should one time fester, and another time bleed, so that he should never be whole, till that the best knight of

the world had searched his wounds. And in this manner she made her vaunt, wherethrough it was known that Sir Urre should never be whole. Then Sir Urre's mother let make an horse litter, and put him therein under two palfreys. And then she took Sir Urre's sister with him, which was a full fair damsel, whose name was Feloly. And then she took a page with her to keep their horses. And so they led Sir Urre through many countries ; for she led him so seven years, through all lands Christian, and never she could find no knight that might ease her son. So at the last she came into Scotland and into the bounds of England, and at the feast of Pentecost at King Arthur's court, that at that time was holden at Carlisle. And when she came there, then she made it openly to be known how she was come into that country for to have her son healed. Then King Arthur let call the lady, and asked her the cause why she had brought that hurt knight into that country.

My most noble lord King Arthur, said that lady, wit ye well I brought him hither for to be healed of his wounds, the which of all these seven years might not be healed.

And then she told the King where he was wounded, and of whom, and how his mother had discovered in her pride how she had wrought that

by enchantment, so that he should never be whole unto the time that the best knight of the world had searched his wounds—

And so I have passed through all the lands Christian for to have him healed, except this land, and if that I fail to heal him here in this country, I will never take more pain upon me. And that is pity, for he was a full good knight, and of great nobleness.

What is his name? said King Arthur.

My good and gracious lord, said she, *his name is Sir Urre of the Mount.*

In good time, said King Arthur, *and sith ye are come hither into this country, ye are welcome. And wit ye well, that here shall your son be healed, an if any Christian man may heal him; and for to give all other men of worship courage, I myself will assay to handle your son. And so shall all the kings, dukes and earls that be here present with me at this time, and thereto I will command them. And well I wot, they shall obey and do after my command. And wit ye well,* said King Arthur unto Sir Urre's sister, *I shall begin to handle him and search him unto my power, not presuming upon me that I am so worthy to heal your brother by my deeds, but I will encourage other men of worship to do as I will do.*

And then the King commanded all the kings, dukes, and earls, and all the noble Knights of the Round Table that were there at that time present, to come into the meadow of Carlisle. And so at that time there were but an hundred and ten Knights of the Round Table, for forty knights were away. And so here we must begin at King Arthur, as is kindly to begin at him, that was the most man of worship that was christened at that time.

Then King Arthur looked upon Sir Urre, and thought in himself that he had been a full likely man when he was whole. And then King Arthur made him to be taken out of the litter, and laid him upon the ground, and there was laid a cushion of cloth of gold that he should kneel upon. And then King Arthur said :

Fair knight, me repenteth of thy hurt, and to encourage all other noble knights, I will pray thee for to suffer me softly to handle thy wounds.

Most noble Christian King, said Sir Urre, *do as it shall please you, for I am here at the mercy of God, and at your command.*

So then King Arthur softly handled him, and then some of his wounds renewed on bleeding. Then after King Arthur, King Claraunce of Northumberland searched, and it would not be. And then Sir Barraunt le Apres, that was called the king

with the hundred knights, he assayed and failed ; and so did King Urience, of the land of Gower ; so did King Anguish of Ireland ; so did King Nentres of Garloth ; so did King Carados of Scotland ; so did the Duke Galahalt, the haut prince ; so did Constantine, that was King Carados's son of Cornwall ; so did Duke Chalaunce of Claraunce ; so did the Earl Ulbause ; so did the Earl Lambaile ; so did the Earl Aristause. Then came in Sir Gawaine, with his three sons, Sir Gyngalyn, Sir Florence, and Sir Lovell ; these three were begotten upon Sir Brandiles's sister ; and Sir Gawaine and his sons failed. Then came in Sir Agrawaine, Sir Gaheris, Sir Mordred, and the good knight Sir Gareth, which was of very knighthood worth all the brethren. So there came knights of Sir Launcelot's kin ; but Sir Launcelot was not at that time in the court, for he was at that time on his adventures. Then Sir Lionell, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Bors de Ganis, Sir Blamor de Ganis, Sir Bleoberis de Ganis, Sir Galhalantin, Sir Galihodin, Sir Manadiuke, Sir Villiars le Valiaunt, Sir Hebes le Renowme, all these knights were of Sir Launcelot's kin, and they failed every each one. Then came in Sir Sagramore le Desirous, Sir Dodinas le Savage, Sir Dinadan, Sir Brunor le Noire, which Sir Kay called 'la Cote Male Taile,'

and Sir Kay the seneschal, Sir Kay de Straungis, Sir Meliot de Logris, and Sir Petipace of Winchelsea; Sir Galleron of Galway, Sir Melion of the Mountain, Sir Sadocke, Sir Uwaine les Avoutres, and Sir Ozanna le Cœur Hardi. Then there came in Sir Astamore, and Sir Gromore, Sir Grummor's son, Sir Crosselme, Sir Servause le Breuse, which was at that time called one of the strongest knights of the world. For the chief Lady of the Lake feasted this Sir Servause le Breuse, and Sir Launcelot du Lake; and so when she had feasted them both, at sundry times, she prayed them to grant her a boon; and they granted to her. And then she prayed Sir Servause le Breuse, that he would promise her never to do battle against Sir Launcelot du Lake; and in the same manner of wise, she prayed Sir Launcelot du Lake never to do battle against Sir Servause le Breuse; and so either of them promised unto other. That Sir Servause had never no lust nor courage to do battle against no man, but if it were against giants, and against dragons, and such other wild beasts. So we pass unto them which, at the King's request, made them all that were there at that high feast, as of all the Knights of the Round Table, for to search Sir Urre; to that intent the King did it, for to know which was the noblest knight among

them all. Then there came in Sir Aglovaile, Sir Durnar, and Sir Tor, the which was begotten upon Aries the cowherd's wife; but this Sir Tor was begotten before Aries the cowherd had wedded her. And King Pellinore begat all these knights. First, Sir Tor, Sir Aglovaile, Sir Durnar, Sir Lamorake, which was one of the most noble knights that ever was in King Arthur's days, as for a worldly knight, and Sir Percivale that was peerless, except Sir Galahad, in holy deeds; but they died in the quest of the Sanc Greall. Then came in Sir Griflet le Fils de Dieu, Sir Lucan the butler, Sir Bedivere his brother, Sir Brandiles, Sir Constantine, Sir Cador's son of Cornwall, which was king after Arthur's days, and Sir Clegis, Sir Sadocke, Sir Dinas the Seneschal of Cornwall, Sir Fergus, Sir Driaunt, Sir Lambegus, Sir Clarus of Cleremount, Sir Clodrus, Sir Hectimere, Sir Edward of Carnarvon, Sir Dinas, Sir Priamus, which was christened by the noble knight Sir Tristram, and these three were brethren; Sir Helaine le Blanc, which was son unto Sir Bors, and he begat him upon King Brandegoris's daughter, and Sir Brian de Listinoise. Sir Gautere, Sir Reinold, Sir Gillemere were three brethren, that Sir Launcelot won upon a bridge, in Sir Kay's armour. Sir Guiart le Petit, Sir Bellangere le

Breuse, which was son unto the good Sir Alisaunder l'Orphelin, that was slain by the treason of King Marke. Also, that false traitor, King Marke, slew the noble knight Sir Tristram, as he sat harping before his lady La Belle Isond, with a trenchant glaive, for whose death was much bewailing. Of every knight that ever was in King Arthur's days, there was never none so bewailed as was Sir Tristram and Sir Lamorake, for they were traitorously slain—Sir Tristram by King Marke, and Sir Lamorake by Sir Gawaine and his brethren. And this Sir Bellangere revenged the death of his father Sir Alisaunder l'Orphelin, and Sir Tristram slew King Marke. And La Belle Isond died, swooning, upon the corpse of Sir Tristram, whereof it was great pity. And all that were with King Marke, that were consenting to the death of Sir Tristram, were slain, as Sir Andred and many other. Then came Sir Hebes, Sir Morganore, Sir Sentraile, Sir Suppinabiles, Sir Bellangere le Orgulous, which the good Knight Sir Launcelot won in plain battle ; Sir Nereous and Sir Plenorius, two good knights that Sir Launcelot won, Sir Darras, Sir Harry le Fils Lak, Sir Hermenid, brother to King Hermance, for whom Sir Palomides fought at the red city, with two brethren, and Sir Selises of the Dolorous Tower. Sir Edward of

Orkney, and Sir Ironside, which was called the noble Knight of the Red Lands, that Sir Gareth won for the love of Dame Lioness; Sir Arroche de Grevaunt, Sir Degraïne sans Vilanie, that fought with the giant of the black low; Sir Epinogris, that was the king's son of Northumberland; Sir Pelleas, which loved the lady Ettarde, and he had died for her love had not been one of the ladies of the lake; her name was Dame Nimue, and she wedded Sir Pelleas, and she saved him that he was never slain, and he was a full noble knight. Sir Lamiel of Cardiff, that was a great lover; Sir Plaine de Force, Sir Meleaus de Lile, Sir Robert le Cœur Hardi, which was King Arthur's son. Sir Madoc de la Port, Sir Colgrevaunce, Sir Hervise de la Forêt Sauvage, Sir Marrocke, the good knight that was betrayed by his wife, for she made him well a seven years a werewolf. Sir Persaunt, and Sir Pertelope his brother, which was called the Green Knight, and Sir Perimones, brother unto them both, which was called the Red Knight, which Sir Gareth of Orkney won, when he was called Beaumains. All these hundred knights and ten searched Sir Urre's wounds, by the commandment of King Arthur.

Mercy Jesu! said King Arthur, *where is Sir Launcelot du Lake, that he is not here at this time?*

Thus as they stood, and spake of many things, there was espied Sir Launcelot, which came riding towards them, and, anon, it was told the King thereof.

Peace, said the King, *let no manner of thing be said untill that he be come to us.*

So when Sir Launcelot espied King Arthur, he descended down from his horse, and came unto the King, and saluted him and them all. Anon, as the maiden, Sir Urre's sister, saw Sir Launcelot, she ran unto her brother there as he lay in his litter, and said :

Brother, here is come a knight that my heart giveth me greatly unto.

Fair sister, said Sir Urre, *so doth my heart light against him, and certainly I hope now to be healed, for my heart giveth unto him more than to all these that have searched me.*

Then said King Arthur unto Sir Launcelot,
Ye must do as we have done ;
and told Sir Launcelot what they had done, and shewed him all those that had searched Sir Urre.

Jesu defend me, said Sir Launcelot, *when so many kings and knights have assayed and failed, that I should presume upon me for to achieve that all ye, my lords, might not achieve.*

Ye shall not choose, said King Arthur, for I will command you for to do as we all have done.

My most renowned lord, said Sir Launcelot, ye know well that I dare not, nor may not, disobey your commandment. But an I might, or durst, wit ye well I would not take it upon me to touch that wounded knight, to that intent that I should pass all other knights. Jesu defend me from that shame!

Ye take it wrong, said King Arthur; ye shall not do it for no presumption, but for to bear us fellowship, inasmuch as ye be a fellow of the Round Table. And wit you well, said King Arthur, an if ye prevail not to heal him, I dare say there is no knight in this country may heal him, and, therefore, I pray you do as we have done.

And then all the kings and knights, for the most part, prayed Sir Launcelot to search him. And then the wounded knight, Sir Urre, set himself up full weakly, and prayed Sir Launcelot heartily, saying thus:—

Courteous knight, I require thee, for God's sake, heal my wounds; for me thinketh ever since ye came here my wounds grieve me not.

My fair lord, said Sir Launcelot, Jesu would that I might help you, and I shame me sore that I should be thus rebuked, for never was I able in worthiness to do so high a thing.

Then Sir Launcelot kneeled down by the wounded knight, saying to him thus :—

My lord, King Arthur, I must needs do your commandment, which is full sore against my heart.

And then he held up his hand, and looked into the East, saying secretly to himself,

Thou blessed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I beseech Thee of Thy mercy, that my simple worship and honesty be saved ; and Thou, blessed Trinity, Thou mayest give power to heal this sick knight by the great virtue and grace of Thee, but, good Lord, never of myself.

And then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Urre for to let him see his head ; and then, devoutly kneeling, he ransacked the three wounds, that they bled a little, and forthwith the three wounds fair healed, and seemed as though they had been whole seven years before. And in likewise he searched his body of three other wounds, and they healed in likewise. And then the last of all he searched, the which was in his hand, and anon it healed fair. Then King Arthur and all the other kings and knights kneeled down, and gave thanks and praise unto God, and to his Blessed Mother, and ever Sir Launcelot wept as he had been a child that had been beaten. Then King Arthur let array priests and clerks in the most devoutest manner, to bring

Sir Urre within Carlisle, with singing and praise unto God. And when this was done, the King let clothe him in the richest manner that could be devised or thought; and there were but few better-made knights in all the court, for he was passingly well made and big. Then King Arthur asked Sir Urre how he felt himself.

My good lord, said he, I felt myself never so lusty.

Will ye just and do deeds of arms? said King Arthur.

Sir, said Sir Urre, an I had all that belonged to justs, I would soon be ready.

Then King Arthur made a party of an hundred knights to be against an hundred knights. And so, on the morrow after, they justed for a diamond; but there justed not one of the dangerous knights; and so, for to make a short tale, Sir Urre and Sir Lavaine justed best that day, for there was none of them both but he overthrew and pulled down thirty knights; and then by the assent of all the kings and lords, both Sir Urre and Sir Lavaine were made Knights of the Round Table. And Sir Lavaine cast his love to dame Feloly, Sir Urre's sister, and then they were wedded together with great joy, and King Arthur gave unto every each of them a barony of lands. And this knight, Sir

Urre, would never go from Sir Launcelot, but he and Sir Lavaine waited evermore upon him ; and they were in all the court accounted for good knights, and full desirous in arms ; and many noble deeds they did, for they would have no rest, but alway sought adventures. Thus they lived in the court, with great nobleness and joy, long time.

ISABELLA, OR THE POT OF BASIL.

(From the 'Decameron.')

IN the presenting of a novel by that well-abused and little-known master of his art, Boccaccio, it seems fitting first to offer some apology for myself and for him. For the first a word or two may suffice; it is the purpose of this book to give some faint reflex of the various epochs and phases through which the noblest imaginative thought has passed; therefore the age of the Renaissance must not be left untouched. But, for Boccaccio, for the sweet diffident poet, the delicate maker, the gay, tender romancist, there rests more to be said. It is generally assumed that this man is a writer so thoroughly impure, that his writings may find no place of favour; but it seems to me that a hasty judgment has been given, based upon slight evidence. True, the tales told are for the most part loose, some few of them filthy: the book could not as a whole be read with pleasure by any honest man or woman in the present day. But, before

condemning it, it seems well to consider a little the times in which it was brought forth.

Italy was then convulsed with the throes of the Renaissance—that new birth which, first blessing the earth with many shapes of beauty, at last cursed it with monsters; and from the feverish pangs that wrung the fair land there came, with other strange and portentous offspring, a certain despair of all highest attainment of excellence, which caused men to dwell greatly upon the present good around them: whence came a searching after beauty of actual being, sweetness of language, daintiness of visible things—good in themselves, but bad ends of being, and enervating to those souls of men which became wrapt up in the pursuit. There was an end of the old sowing that others might reap. Now the motto was, ‘*Carpe diem*,’ ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.’ In Florence, the heart of civilization, it was not likely that folk would be behind their neighbours, in this sad carnival, this *danse macabre*, and, in the height of the revel, Death himself, in most terrible presence, joined the masquers, and the great plague of 1348 came upon the town.

The details of that awful time are too well known from Boccaccio’s own description, but it is upon the general effects of the calamity that I

would insist. The trouble, coming upon a people who were grown careless in life, and lax in religion, drove them mad. Life here was at an end ; no more feasting for them, no more rejoicing in wealth and triumph of success, no more tenderness of mutual relations ; for who would drink, or chaffer, or kiss, with the plague stricken ? Life hereafter had lost existence to them, and it was too late now to care about it, when priest and penitent must shun each other for the dear life's sake, and monk and nun felt the need of flight from the quiet home, now a teeming lazar-house. Therefore, all social bonds being severed, and even the ties of religion loosened, society became so utterly demoralized by sheer fear, that all grew wholly reckless, and motley was the only wear ; what matter though many wept behind the mask ? There was a smile to *look* at. Naturally, when the evil was gone and past, its effects remained. People had got used to the liberty which, at first assumed in the despair of their hearts, was now become a second nature of their being ; it was doubtless pleasant to settle with each other that life was the one thing to live for, and that life meant the thing which all created beings alike share—motion, love, sunlight. It must have been so easy to believe it in that centre of all beauty and luxury ! So Italy gave herself up to the worship

of Baal and Ashtaroth, and in especial Florence sank down in the mire, to wake only after a hundred years, at the trumpet voice of Savonarola.

Of this time we may not doubt that Boccacio's 'Decameron' gives a very faithful portrayal. Coarse beyond all animal conception, it is nevertheless graceful and witty above any other book; the spirit would not leave the diseased body; and in the very coarseness there is something so thoughtless—I had almost said innocent—that the whole becomes as pitiful as foul words from the mouth of a child. Those fair ladies and gallant gentlemen hardly know what it is that they are toying with; the serpent, their playmate, is smooth and brilliant, and they never perhaps think of its poison fangs. Given up to the present pleasure, because of the almost certain agony, they must try every phase of possible enjoyment; if the revel be unduly loud, what matter? The sound of the lutes will drown the distant knell. And when all had lost *belief* in any tangible hereafter, why should they, for the sake of a chimerical joy or anguish, bate one jot of the delights to which their palpitating, living limbs summoned them?

This is the tone of thought and feeling breathed throughout the works of Boccacio, but he is not therefore to be specially blamed; to say that he

is the reflex of his time, is but to proclaim him a man—not one of the greatest of mankind. He could not, or would not, rise above the level of his surroundings, as only the greatest can, or dare ; he only told of things as they were in the minds of his hearers, and gave to them the grace of his own mind. What that grace might have effected had it but dealt with nobler things none can say. What of value may not have been in those poems which the poet burned, in despair of excelling?—a despair which makes one regret the loss of work from the hand of a man brave enough to do the deed. But even in that lower walk which his genius humbly affected, the influence was speedy, and strong, and lasting. France, who had given from the hearts of her Provençal *trouvères* some of the choicest thoughts to the master, reclaimed those thoughts, transplanting into her own garden the flowers that had sprung from her borrowed seed.

Other lands were not slow to gather from the garden, and chiefly England ; for although it was not until the sixteenth century that the Italian mania, at which Rosalind laughed so divinely, possessed the nation, there were some noble spirits among us, who long before helped themselves and fed the people from the garner of Boccaccio.

Chaucer and Lydgate openly borrowed and avowed their borrowing, like honest men, and chiefly Chaucer, who was essentially the poet of the people. The tale of Griselda would never have become so common a household word among us had we known it only in the 'Decameron;' it needed telling by the clerk of Oxenford. Later on, in the 15th century, William Walter versified 'Titus and Gisippus' and 'Sigismunda and Guiscard,' probably with approbation, as they were printed by Wynkyn de Worde. In 1569 again we find Christopher Tye treating that story of 'Nastagio and Traversari,' which later on, in common with 'Sigismunda' and 'Cymon and Iphigenia,' attracted Dryden. Nor has the interest failed, for we come down to our own times only to notice the best work of one of Britain's greatest poets, John Keats, 'Isabella, or the Pot of Basil.'

As to the origin of this most beautiful story, it were idle to speculate. Boccacio, according to his own showing, was indebted to many sources for his stories; the man was too truly great to despise anything that might serve him. Some of his legends might be traced to Eastern sources, gained either through the medium of the fugitive Greek scholars, who flocked in his time to Italy, carrying with them their traditions, or by his

acquaintance with works, now rare and unknown except to the antiquary, but then matter of common delight ; such were the '*Gesta Romanorum*,' to which might perhaps be traced the story of the three rings, and '*Barlaam and Josaphat*,' a romance of the ninth century, and the work of a Greek monk, Joannes Damascenus. But many of the tales were undoubtedly such as he knew from country lore, and of these '*Isabella*' seems to be one. As we know it from Keats's poem, it becomes even more a part of the original reciter than in the form in which it is here given in prose, inasmuch as Filomena's story tells of Messina and not of Florence ; it would seem that the poet felt the author's influence so strongly, that he could not dissever his tale from its surroundings.

To return to the history of the national taste for Boccacio. That rage for everything belonging to Italy in the middle of the sixteenth century, which so much moved Shakespeare's derision, moved the fury of a lesser man to no small degree. Roger Ascham, in his '*Scholemaster*,' complains that the Italian books did more harm than even '*Mort d'Arthur*.' Perhaps it is not necessary to take much account of the opinion of one, who could only see in that first of books a record of manslaughter and debauchery. At all events his outcries were

of little effect ; fashion for once did good service, and before long a version of the 'Decameron' in English was licensed at Stationers' Hall ; but the Church took fright, and in 1619 Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, inhibited the publication. His Grace, however, seems to have proved amenable to argument ; for, in the following year, the first part, from which our version of 'Isabella' is taken, appeared, to be followed, five years later, by a continuation. It is curious that this later part of the folio edition is now of much rarer occurrence than the former. Since that time there have been several renderings of the 'Decameron,' the latest being in Mr. Bohn's collection, but none deserving of much mention.

To come to the subject of the art illustration of 'Isabella.' It is hardly needful to mention Keats's poem further than has already been done, and strangely enough, the story seems never to have been treated either dramatically or lyrically, although it is eminently suited to such treatment. But painters have ever delighted to represent the fair girl in one episode or other of her mournful story. The most notable, though perhaps not the best remembered, instance is Mr. Millais's picture, the first exhibited of his more distinctly pre-Raffaelite paintings—the place of honour is

usually given to 'The Carpenter's Shop,' but therein is a mistake ; 'Isabella' was exhibited in the year 1849, 'The Carpenter's Shop' not until 1850. Mr. G. F. Watts, R.A., has also illustrated the story, and a singularly good picture, now in private hands, was exhibited by the late Mr. W. B. Johnstone, R.S.A., at the exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy, in the year 1854. Of Mr. Holman Hunt's rendering of the subject it is not my purpose to speak ; all may remember, and each may form an opinion as may please himself.

ISABELLA, OR THE POT OF BASIL.

IN Messina there dwelt three young men, brethren, and merchants by their common profession, who becoming very rich by the death of their father, lived in very good fame and repute. Their father was of San Gemignano, and they had a sister named Isabella, young, beautiful, and well conditioned ; who, upon some occasion, as yet remained unmarried. A proper youth, being a gentleman born in Pisa, and named Lorenzo, as a trusty factor or servant, had the managing of the brethren's business and affairs. This Lorenzo being of comely personage, affable, and excellent in his behaviour, grew so gracious in the eyes of Isabella, that she afforded him many very respective looks, yea, kindnesses of no common quality. Which Lorenzo taking notice of, and observing by degrees from time to time, gave over all other beauties in the city which might allure any affection from him, and only fixed his heart on her, so that their love grew to a mutual

embracing, both equally respecting one another, and entertaining kindnesses as occasion gave leave.

Long time continued this amorous league of love, yet not so cunningly concealed, but at the length, the secret meeting of Lorenzo and Isabella, to ease their poor souls of love's oppressions, was discovered by the eldest of the brethren, unknown to them who were thus betrayed. He being a man of great discretion, although this sight was highly displeasing to him, yet notwithstanding he kept it to himself till the next morning, labouring his brain what might best be done in so urgent a case. When day was come, he resorted to his other brethren, and told them what he had seen in the time past between their sister and Lorenzo.

Many deliberations passed on in this case; but after all, thus they concluded together, to let it proceed on with patient supportance, that no scandal might ensue to them or their sister, no evil act being as yet committed. And seeming as if they knew not of their love, had a wary eye still upon her secret walks, awaiting for some convenient time when, without their own prejudice, or Isabella's knowledge, they might safely break off this their stolen love, which was altogether against their liking. So, showing no worse countenance to Lorenzo than formerly they had done, but employing and con-

versing with him in kind manner, it fortuned that, riding all three to recreate themselves out of the city, they took Lorenzo in their company; and when they were come to a solitary place, such as best suited with their vile purpose, they ran suddenly upon Lorenzo, slew him, and afterwards interred his body where hardly it could be discovered by anyone. Then they returned back to Messina, and gave it forth, as a credible report, that they had sent him abroad about their affairs, as formerly they were wont to do; which every one verily believed, because they knew no reason why they should conceit any otherwise.

Isabella, living in expectation of his return, and perceiving his stay to her was so offensively long, made many demands to her brethren into what parts they had sent him, that his tarrying was so quite from all wonted course. Such was her importunate speeches to them, that they taking it very discontentedly, one of them returned her this frowning answer :—

What is your meaning, sister, by so many questionings after Lorenzo? What urgent affairs have you with him, that makes you so impatient upon his absence? If hereafter you make any more demands for him, we shall shape you such a reply as will be but little to your liking!

At these harsh words, Isabella fell into abundance of tears, where-among she mingled many sighs and groans, such as were able to overthrow a far stronger constitution ; so that, being full of fear and dismay, yet no way distrusting her brethren's cruel deed, she durst not question any more after him.

In the silence of dark night, as she lay afflicted in her bed, oftentimes would she call for Lorenzo, entreating his speedy returning to her ; and then again, as if he had been present with her, she checked and reprov'd him for his so long absence. One night amongst the rest, she being grown almost hopeless of ever seeing him again, having a long while wept and grievously lamented, her senses and faculties utterly spent and tired, that she could not utter any more complaints, she fell into a trance or sleep, and dreamed that the ghost of Lorenzo appeared unto her in torn and unbecoming garments, his looks pale, meagre, and staring, and, as she thought, thus spake to her :—

My dear love, Isabella ; thou dost nothing but torment thyself with calling on me, accusing me for over-long tarrying from thee : I am come therefore to let thee know that thou canst not enjoy my company any more, because the very same day when last thou sawest me thy brethren most bloodily murdered me.

And, acquainting her with the place where they had buried his mangled body, he strictly charged her not to call him at any time afterward, and so vanished away.

The young damsel awaking, and giving some credit to her vision, sighed and wept exceedingly ; and after she was risen in the morning, not daring to say anything to her brethren, she resolutely determined to go see the place formerly appointed her, only to make trial if that which she seemed to see in her sleep should carry any likelihood of truth. Having obtained favour of her brethren to ride a day's journey from the city, in company with her trusty nurse, who long time had attended on her in the house, and knew the secret passages of her love, they rode directly to the designed place ; which being covered with some store of dried leaves, and more deeply sunk than any other part of the ground thereabout, they digged not far but they found the body of murdered Lorenzo, as yet very little corrupted or impaired, and then perceived the truth of her vision.

Wisdom and government so much prevailed with her, as to instruct her soul, that her tears spent there were merely fruitless and in vain, neither did the time require any long tarrying there. Gladly would she have carried the whole body with her,

secretly to bestow honourable interment on it, but it exceeded the compass of her ability. Wherefore, in regard she could not have all, yet she would be possessed of a part ; and, having brought a keen razor with her, by help of the nurse she divided the head from the body, and wrapped it up in a napkin, which the nurse conveyed into her lap, and then laid the body in the ground again. Thus, being undiscovered by any, they departed thence, and arrived at home in convenient time ; where, being alone by themselves in the chamber, she washed the head over and over with her tears, and bestowed infinite kisses thereon.

Not long after, the nurse having brought her a large earthen pot, such as we use to set basil, marjoram, flowers, or other sweet herbs in, and shrouding the head in a silken scarf, put it into the pot, covering it with earth, and planting divers roots of excellent basil therein, which she never watered but either with her tears, rose water, or water distilled from the flowers of oranges. This pot she continually used to sit by, either in her chamber or anywhere else ; for she carried it always with her, sighing and breathing forth sad complaints thereto, even as if they had been uttered to her Lorenzo ; and day by day this was her continual exercise. to the no mean

admiration of her brethren, and many other friends that beheld her.

So long she held on in this mourning manner, that, what by the continual watering of the basil and putrefaction of the head so buried in the pot of earth, it grew very flourishing, and most odoriferous to such as scented it, so that as no other basil could possibly yield so sweet a savour. The neighbours, noting this behaviour in her, observing the long continuance thereof, how much her bright beauty was defaced, and the eyes sunk into her head by incessant weeping, made many kind and friendly motions to understand the reason of her so violent oppressions ; but could not by any means prevail with her, or win any discovery by her nurse, so faithful was she in secrecy to her. Her brethren also waxed weary of this carriage in her ; and, having very often reprov'd her for it, without any other alteration in her, at length they closely stole away the pot of basil from her, for which she made infinite woeful lamentations, earnestly entreating to have it restored again, avouching that she could not live without it.

Perceiving that she could not have the pot again, she fell into an extreme sickness, occasioned only by her ceaseless weeping, and never urg'd she to have anything but the restoring of her basil-pot.

Her brethren grew greatly amazed thereat, because she never called for aught else beside, and thereupon were very desirous to ransack the pot to the very bottom. Having emptied out all the earth, they found the scarf of silk, wherein the head of Lorenzo was wrapped, which was as yet not so much consumed but, by the locks of hair, they knew it to be Lorenzo's head, whereat they became confounded with amazement.

Fearing lest their offence might come to open publication, they buried it very secretly; and, before any could take notice thereof, they departed from Messina and went to dwell in Naples. Isabella, crying and calling still for her pot of basil, being unable to give over mourning, died within a few days after.

Thus have you heard the hard fate of poor Lorenzo and his Isabella. Within no long while after, when this accident came to be publicly known, an excellent ditty was composed thereof, beginning thus :

Cruel and unkind was the Christian
That robbed me of my basil's bliss, &c.

THE MARRIAGE OF BELPHEGOR.

(By Macchiavelli.)

THESE annals of a bygone time, stray echoes of forgotten tongues, began with a wedding—they may fittingly end with the same. And in the difference of the nuptials lies the moral; the sorrowful tale of that loss of purity, which in the downfall of time came to weaken men's hearts, and make ready the world for the discord and revolution from which it yet suffers.

The 'Marriage of Belphegor' is the outcome of feeling in the later Renaissance, and is about as good an example as could well be chosen of the state to which popular feeling had then sunk. There is no longer, as in the classic times, the sweet union of the Soul and of Love, to the begetting of Pleasure; no longer the simple acknowledgment of mutual relations which we find in the tales of later days, when those near akin cleave to each other because they are of one blood, when lovers love for love's sake alone—for that sake

defying the laws of earth, and even of heaven—and friend holds true to friend ; even the last link is gone, and man and woman no more are bound together even by the ties of mutual desire. There is nothing but unbelief, and scorning, and bitter laughter, such as prevailed in that bad time. Even the author, whose name has become a byword for treachery and ill-doing, seems to feel the evil of that which he sets forth—at the same time that he offers it to his hearers as one who knows that it will not jar upon their ears—and is fain to take a devil of hell as his hero. To none other could such a marriage and such wedded life be fitted ; yet, probably, matches of the kind were common enough in Florence ; none but a fiend could so have repaid kindness, and it was a very paltry device that scared away that fiend, proving him both coward and fool.

It may be, that Macchiavelli knew how his kind treated their friends, and saw the boasters cower before fancied danger. Still, he does not seem to expect that anyone will be shocked at the utter depravity of sentiment with which the whole story is rife ; he treats of marriage as a matter of custom, but of doubtful convenience, and of religion as a thing of naught ; and we may be sure that one so astute as he suited his words to

his audience. One of the most striking points in the history is the way in which its teller covertly sneers at the details of his own religion ; at an earlier date, such sneers would have been as impossible to the mind of any man as they are offensive. The pagan romancer, writing after the zenith of paganism, still teaches reverence to what men held sacred. The Gothic writers never dreamed of teaching what was to them a mere fact and essential of being. But, now at last, men had learned to sneer, and pry, and pick out failings in what was above them, and therefore hateful to their lessening minds ; and, forsooth, it was a good jest, and food for laughter, that holy men sometimes strayed from the strait way, and that folk had believed overmuch in forms and ceremonies ! Such a tale as this, such a miserable record of weakness and decadence, is the 'Marriage of Belphegor.'

But, setting aside the moral of the story, the matter of it is admirable. The whole construction is as clever in imagination, as it is witty and thorough in execution. Neither Boccacio, Banello, nor any one of their many followers has surpassed this romance, and it may take rank as the culminating point of that art of story-telling which rose in Italy in the fourteenth century, to prepare the way for nobler work in all the earth ; the foun-

dation, however fragile in seeming, of the great temple of modern literature. Where Macchiavelli found it, there is nothing to show, so we may credit him with the merit of the original conception, as a sarcastic comment upon the manners of his own time and country, couched in the form then most popular. There is, it is true, a Spanish tale somewhat similar ; but it seems hardly probable that a Florentine writer would be acquainted with it, unless, indeed, he learned it from some courtier of his idol, Cæsar Borgia. If he *did* borrow the idea, he certainly did not improve on it, as far as fun goes, by substituting the wife for her mother as the person whose arrival Belphegor so much dreaded.

Besides the present version of the story, which is taken from the folio edition of Macchiavelli's works, printed in London in the year 1675, there is extant a curious localised rendering, in a book notable for other reasons, Rich's 'Farewell to Militarie Profession,' published in 1581. This work, which has become so rare that Mr. Collier notes the existence of only one perfect copy, from which a reprint was in the year 1846 made for the Shakspeare Society, consists of nine tales, the 'Marriage of Belphegor' being the ninth ; but among the other stories is one, 'Apolonius and Silla,' which has been judged by good authorities to be the original source of

Shakspeare's best comedy, 'Twelfth Night, or What you Will.' Rich spoiled his author in attempting to render him, and seems to have inserted the tale chiefly that he might jeer at the feminine love of dress. This appears to be the first English rendering of the story; it was followed in 1647 by another, entitled 'The Divell a Married Man, or the Divell hath met with his Match,' an actual translation, although in a somewhat abridged form, of the original. Versions were also put forth in 1720, 1762, 1763, and 1775, the second and fourth being identical, and from the same hand. Of poetical treatment of the subject in our own tongue there are two instances, the one being a fragment published in 1824 by the Rev. S. Weston, and the other a poem, in exceedingly bad decasyllabic verse, by an anonymous author, which appeared some thirty years since.

La Fontaine's version is well known, chiefly on account of Madame Molière and her identification by contemporary wits with the shrewish Honesta. Later on the story was versified in *terza rima* by Giambatista Faguioli, who carefully expurgated the original, and dedicated his work to St. Mary Magdalene; this last-named poem has been published within the present century.

- As far as I know, or can ascertain, the novel has never furnished subjects for either pictorial or dramatic illustration ; for the former it is evidently unsuited, but to a skilful playwright it may yet commend itself.

THE MARRIAGE OF Belphegor.

IT is recorded in the ancient chronicles of Florence, that a certain holy person, whose life was the admiration of that age, falling one day into a trance, had a very strange apparition ; it seemed to him, that the souls of married men that came trooping in great numbers to hell, cried out all of them, as they passed, that their marriage was the cause of their misery, and their wives the occasion of their coming thither. Minos, Radamanth, and the whole infernal privy council were amazed at the clamour ; at first they could not believe there was anything in the business, but at last, observing the same complaints continually multiplied, they thought it fit to make Pluto acquainted. Pluto understanding the report, without imparting anything to his wife, who had taken physic that week, and kept her chamber, resolved the matter should be accurately examined, and such course be taken as was likeliest to make the speediest discovery of the truth : he issued out his writs immediately, and

assembled his courts; his princes, dukes, counts, and barons were all present; never was senate so full, nor never was affair of that importance before it. The holy father that beheld all affirms positively, that Pluto delivered himself in this manner :

Right trusty and well-beloved !

Though our kingdom was assigned us from Heaven, and the fatal decree has anciently determined our dominion : though that sentence be irrevocable, and above the cognisance of any human power : yet, seeing his prudence is most safe that is dictated by laws, and his judgment most solid that is fortified with others, we are resolved to take your counsels along with us, which way we are to steer in an affair, that otherwise may prove in time of great dishonour to our government. The souls of married men, that are continually flocking into our dominions, do unanimously exclaim against their wives as the only persons that send them tumbling hither. To us it seems impossible : yet, forasmuch as a peremptory and determinate sentence upon their bare allegations would not suit with our Satanical mercy, so a careless pretermission on the other side could not be without reflection on our justice : that matters of such importance, therefore, may have their due disquisition, and our administration be defended from obloquy or scandal ; that no inconveniency

may follow for want of deliberation, and that some better expedient may be found out than ourselves have happily thought on, we have thought good to call you together ; being confident and assured, by the assistance of your counsels, the honour and reputation of our empire will be continued as unquestionable for the future, as it has been preserved hitherto by our own proper care and solicitude.

There was not one present but acknowledged it a business of importance, and well worthy an exact consideration ; it was the opinion of the whole board that all imaginable means was to be used to find out the truth, but what means that was could not be agreed on. Some were of opinion, a single person was to be despatched into this world, and no more ; others judged it better to send several, and that the discovery would be more certain from the experience of many than of one ; a third sort, more brisk and severe in their counsels, thought that clutter unnecessary, and that clapping good store of them together upon the rack would be enough, doubtless, to extort a confession. However, it was at last carried by the plurality of voices that a single person only should be sent, and in this resolution the whole company acquiesced ; nevertheless, there being nobody found that would voluntarily undertake the employment, it was

concluded the election should be by lot ; and at the same time, having made their billets and shuffled them, the lot fell upon Belphegor.

One may say, and say true, that fortune never decided anything so justly ; for Belphegor was no ordinary devil, and Pluto having made him formerly generalissimo of his armies, 'tis to be presumed he was no novice ; for all this, he had a month's mind to be quit of his embassy ; but the order being unalterable, he was forced to submit, and accept these conditions that were solemnly decreed :—that an hundred thousand ducats should be paid him immediately, to defray the expenses of his journey ; that he should assume the shape of a man ; that he should take a woman to his wedded wife, and live with her, if possible, ten years ; that at the end of the term, pretending to die, he should give her the slip, repair immediately to his old quarters, and make affidavit upon his own experience of all the pleasures and calamities of matrimony.

It was declared to him also that, during this metamorphosis, he was to be subject to the pains and misfortunes of humanity, as sickness, imprisonment, and poverty ; but that, if by his cunning or dexterity he could disentangle himself, it should be allowed him, and not imputed as any scandal or reproach. Belphegor accepts the conditions, receives his

ducats, and having drawn a spruce party of horse out of his guards, and furnished himself with pages and footmen good store, he set out immediately for this world, and arrived at Florence in a very fair equipage ; he chose that place above all other, for the conveniency of improving his monies, and putting it to interest with greater advantage. He called himself Don Roderic of Castile ; he took a very noble house in the faubourg of All Saints ; and, that his quality might be undiscovered, he gave out that he was a Spaniard ; that, being young, he took a voyage into Syria ; that he had dwelt some time in Aleppo, where he had got most part of his estate, but being weary there he was come into Italy, as a country more agreeable with his humour, with intention, if any fair opportunity was offered, to marry.

Don Roderic seemed to be a very handsome man, about thirty years of age, and in short time after his arrival he made it evident enough that he was rich, and, by his liberality, that he knew how to make the best use of them ; inso-much as several gentlemen of Florence, that had more daughters than money, took all possible pains to insinuate how welcome he should be unto their alliance. Don Roderic, that had choice of mistresses, preferred one that was transcendently

handsome before them all ; the story says she was called Honesta, and was the daughter of Americ Donati, who had three more also to marry, and three sons between twenty or twenty-five years of age. But though Signor Americ was of one of the noblest families of Florence, yet he was looked upon as down the wind, and one that was overlaid with too many children, and the unavoidable charges of his nobility ; but Don Roderic took an order for that, defraying the whole expense of his wedding out of his own purse, managing all things with that splendour and magnificence, that there was nothing omitted that was desirable upon such an occasion.

It was mentioned before, as one of the conditions proposed to Belphegor, that, as soon as he was out of the infernal dominions, he should be subject to all the passions of mankind ; and accordingly he began immediately to take delight in the honours and gallantry of the world, and, as cunning a devil as he was, to be wheedled with the flatteries and applauses of men ; but that which delighted him so much cost him dear ; besides that, he had not been long with Honesta but he fell stark mad in love with her, and, finding something or other extraordinary in her that I cannot think of, he was so far enamoured, he never thought himself

happy before ; insomuch as when she was melancholy, or out of humour, he would curse his commission, and take his corporal oath his very life was tedious. On the other side it is not to be forgot, that Honesta marrying Roderic, and bringing him beauty and nobility instead of a portion, she thought it not fit to leave her pride and untractableness behind her ; these two good qualities were so eminently in her, that Roderic, who had been used to Lucifer's, and had more than once had experience of it, swore point-blank his wife's insolence was beyond it ; for when she once found the fondness and passion her husband had for her, believing she could manage him with a switch, and order him as she pleased, she carried herself like his sovereign, and handled him without pity or respect ; and if it happened he denied her anything, she gave him immediately to understand that she was also as eloquent in scolding as others of her quality.

By this you may judge what a cooler this was to Don Roderic ; nevertheless the consideration of his father-in-law, his wife's brothers, the kindred he had by that blessed marriage, but, above all, the passion and tenderness he had for her, made him endure all patiently. I shall not mention the expense of his clothes, which, though never so rich, he was forced to change every week, according to the ordinary

vanity of the ladies in Florence. Besides these, there were other things were of no less inconvenience ; he was forced, to preserve the peace, to assist his father-in-law in the marriage of his other daughters, which cost him a good round sum : moreover, that all things might go well, and his correspondence continue with his consort, he was glad to send one of her brothers into the Levant with woollen stuffs, another into France and Spain with silks, and to furnish the third with wherewithal to set up a goldsmith's shop in Florence : all which afflictions together were enough to discompose any devil of a thousand, yet he had other thrown into the bargain.

There is not any town in all Italy more extravagant in their expenses, in their carnivals and feasts of St. John, than Florence ; and Honesta, upon that occasion, must needs have her Roderic outdo all people of his rank, in the sumptuousness of his entertainments, in the magnificence of his balls, and other divertisements that are usual at those times : he suffered all these calamities for the same reasons he endured the rest, and though perhaps these difficulties were very hard and unpleasant, he would have thought them supportable could he have been satisfied his patience would have procured any quietness in his

family, and that he might have peaceably attended the hour of his destruction. But Don Roderic found the clear contrary ; besides the expense you have heard she occasioned, her insolence was accompanied with a thousand other inconveniences, insomuch as he could keep neither officer nor servant in his house above three days together.

This was severe trouble to him, to find it was impossible to keep anybody about him, though never so well experienced or affected to his affairs ; nor indeed could anybody blame them for taking their leaves, when the devils themselves, that he brought along with him, did choose rather to return, and toast the bottoms of their feet against the fire of hell, than live in this world under the dominion of so super-devilish a woman. Roderic's life being thus miserably uncomfortable, and his stock that he had reserved exhausted by her extravagant expenses, he was reduced to that pass, he subsisted only upon the hopes of the advantage he should make by the return of some vessels he had sent into the east and west. And whereas before, he had very good credit in that town, to continue it and keep up his port, he borrowed money of such as are used in that place to put it out ; but those kind of people being such as are not usually sleepy or negligent in their affairs, they took notice im-

mediately he was not over-punctual to his day : his purse being already empty, and he reduced to the highest extremity, at one dash he receives news of two as disastrous accidents as could possibly befall him. The first was, that one of Honesta's brothers had lost at hazard all that Roderic had entrusted in his hands, and the other was no more welcome, which was, that his other brother-in-law, returning into Italy, was himself cast away and all his goods.

The business was no sooner known in Florence, but his creditors had a meeting, where, giving him over for one that was irrecoverably lost, and not daring to discover themselves because the time of payment was not yet come, they concluded he was to be watched very close, lest he should chouse them and show them a light pair of heels. Don Roderic of Castile on the other side, considering with himself his affairs were past remedy, and also the terms he was obliged to by the infernal law, resolves to take horse and begone without more ado, which he performed without much difficulty, living conveniently for that by the Porto del Prato : yet he was no sooner marched off but the alarm was taken by his creditors ; they repair immediately to the magistrates, and pursue him not merely with post and officers, but, lest a certain number of ducats should debauch that kind of cattle, who are

no better in Italy than other places, and prevail with them for an abatement of their speed, they follow him themselves in a full body, with impatience of hearing some tidings of him. Roderic, in the mean time, was no fool, but considered very well what he had to do; as soon as he was galloped about half-a-league from the town, he leaves the highway, and his horse with it, the country being enclosed and full of ditches on both sides, and was forced to make the rest of his journey on foot; which he did very successfully, for, wandering up and down under the shelter of the vines and reeds that abound much in those parts, he arrived at last at Peretola, at the house of Gian Matteo del Bricca, bailiff to Gian del Bene.

By very good fortune he meets Matteo carrying fodder to his cattle; he accosts him immediately, and promises him as he was a gentleman, that if he would deliver him from the catchpoles that were in pursuit of him, with design to clap him up and starve him in prison, he had an invention in his pate would make him rich out of hand, and of this he would give such evidence before he departed, as should assure him of his truth and fidelity, and,

If I do not, says he, with a damned imprecation, I will be content to be delivered up into their clutches that persecute me!

Now you must understand that, though Matteo was an hind and a peasant, yet the fellow had cunning enough, and knew on which side his bread was buttered ; he considered, if he undertook him and miscarried, he had nothing to lose, and that if he succeeded he should be made for ever ; without any more ado therefore he promises him protection, and clapping him close upon a dunghill that was before the gate, he covered him over with brush-faggots and reeds, and such other fuel as lay there in readiness for the fire. And indeed he was no sooner in his retirements, but in came the creditors with full cry ; they swaggered and laid about them like lords, but all to no purpose ; Matteo could not be persuaded to confess so much as that he saw him ; insomuch as, marching on still in the pursuit, but with as little success as they came thither, they gave Roderic and their money over for lost, and returned to Florence every jot as wise as they were before. The coast being clear in this manner, and the alarm over, Matteo steals to the closet where he had left Roderic, gives him a little fresh air, and conjures him to be as good as his word. Roderic was very honest in that point, and, I daresay, never any devil, as to matters of gratitude, had more of a gentleman ; he gave him thanks for the great obligation he had received, he swore over and over

again he would do whatever lay in his power to discharge himself of his promise, and in the heat and height of his compliments, to convince him that he meant as he said, he gives him the whole story as you have had it, and at last told him the very way that he had pitched upon to make him a prince.

Know then, says he, that whenever you hear of any lady that is possessed, 'tis no other devil but I that have possessed her; and be sure I will never leave her, till you come yourself and force me from my quarters, after which you have wit enough to make your own terms for your payment.

They had very few words more; he only gave him the somersault once or twice, and showed him two or three juggling tricks, and vanished.

A while after, there was a great noise about the town, that Messer Ambrosio Amidei's daughter, that was married to Bonaculo Tebalducci's son, was possessed. Her father and mother did not fail to use all the remedies are usual in so deplorable a case; they brought before her St. Zanobe's head, and St. John Gualbert's cloak, which was nuts to Belphegor and made him nothing but laugh. There was nobody in her but Don Roderic of Castile, who was as ingenious a gentleman-devil as one would wish; and that the world might take

notice that this was no fantastic imagination, nor fit of the nightmare, nor any such trifle, but that she was really possessed, she spake Latin better than Tully ever writ, disputed in philosophy, and discovered the secrets and sins of several people that were there, who were very much surprised to find the devil concern himself with those kind of affairs.

Amongst the rest, there was one holy father he did a great discourtesy to, in blurting out before the whole company as if he had kept a young lass four years together in his cell, in the habit of a young monk ; and after all this, let anybody judge whether the profession was not like to be true. Ambrosio in the mean time was in great affliction for his daughter : he had tried all the ways that physic or religion could propose, but to no purpose ; so as he was brought to the highest point of despair, when Matteo came to him and undertook the cure of his daughter, if he would give him five hundred florins, which he designed to lay out in land at Peretola. In short, Matteo was an honest fellow, and would have done the miracle gratis, and like a gentleman, but his pockets were hollow, and he had great occasion for money at that time. Signor Ambrosio accepts the conditions, and Matteo falls to work ; he began very civilly with certain masses and other

ceremonies, that he might appear the more formal in the business; at length he stole to the lady's ear, calls Roderic, and tells him he was come thither to him, and did require him to be as good as his word.

Content, says Roderic; and that you may see I shall deal with you like a person of quality, take notice, that because this expedition is not enough to enrich you, and do your business, I will befriend you more than once; for which reason, as soon as I am departed from hence, away I'll march into the daughter of Charles the King of Naples, and don't fear but I'll stick to her until you come to exorcise me, so as there you may make up your markets at a blow, and become considerable for ever; but be sure after that I be troubled with you no more!

And as soon as he had said so, whip says he out of the lady, and was gone, to the great joy and astonishment of the whole town.

Belphegor in the mean time was as good as his word; as he promised Matteo, away he goes, and in two or three days' time it was all over Italy that the daughter of Charles, King of Naples, was in the same condition, which was good news for Matteo, who was at this bout to gain the philosopher's stone. In short, he tried all means possible; the monks went to work with their prayers and their

crosses, but to no purpose ; the devil would not budge till Matteo came himself, who had formerly obliged him. The King had news of what had happened at Florence, and sends away immediately for Matteo to his court, who came accordingly, and after some few ceremonious formalities, counterfeited for concealment of the mystery, he cures his daughter. However, Roderic before his departure, as is recorded in the chronicle, accosted him in this manner :

You see, Matteo, I have been as good as my word ; you see you are become rich in a trice, and may take your ease for the future. So, as, if I be not mistaken, I have discharged myself as to you very honestly, hereafter have a care how you come near me ; for, as hitherto I have done you knight's service, henceforward I will do you as much mischief as I can !

Matteo being returned to Florence very wealthy, for the King of Naples had given him above five thousand ducats, he thought of nothing now but enjoying that peaceably he had got, never imagining Roderic would do him any harm ; but his designs were much frustrated by a report out of France, that Louis the Seventh's daughter was possessed as the former. Matteo was in great trouble : on the one side, he was not ignorant of

the power of that prince ; on the other, he remembered Roderic's last words. The King used all means possible, but without any success ; he was told what feats Matteo had done, and despatched a post to him immediately, to desire his company at Paris ; but Matteo pretending I know not what indispositions, that rendered him incapable of serving his Majesty, the King was forced to write to the magistrates, who sent away Matteo immediately.

Being arrived at Paris, he was in great affliction, because he knew not which way for his life to perform what was expected from him. At last he goes to the King and tells him, that true it was indeed he had formerly wrought some cures in that kind, but that it was not in reason to be expected he could dispossess all people he met with, seeing there were some devils so refractory and cross-grained, neither threats, nor enchantments, nor devotion itself would do no good on ; that he said not this out of any repugnancy, or unwillingness to do as he was desired, but that, in case his endeavours were ineffectual, he might have his Majesty's pardon. The King was stark mad at the story, and told him in plain terms, if he did not rout the devil out of his daughter as he had done out of others, he would hang him forthwith, for he saw no

reason why miracles were not as feasible at Paris as at Florence and Naples. These words touched Matteo to the quick ; he thought there was no pleasure to be taken in being hanged in that manner, and that what the King had said was without any equivocation : however, he recollected himself a little, or at least pretended so, and, calling for the princess that was possessed, he makes his approaches, and whispering her in the ear, told Roderic he was his very humble servant, and put him in mind of the good office he had done him when he delivered him out of the talons of the law ; adding withal, that if he left him in the lurch, in the extremity of danger he was then in, the whole world would cry out on his ingratitude. Roderic heard him with no more patience than needs must ; he swaggers, swears, storms, and lays about like a devil in good earnest, gives him a thousand and a thousand ill words, but they could distinguish only these few at the last :

How now, you rascally traitor, have you the impudence to come near me again ? Have you forgot it was I that made you your fortune ? But I'll make all the world see, and you too, that I can take away as well as give ; besides which, you shall not fail to be hanged before you get away from Paris !

Poor Matteo seeing no other remedy for his misfortunes, he fell a-thinking of some other way, and having sent back the lady to her chamber, he made this speech to the King :

Sire, I have told you before that there are certain illnated, capricious spirits, one knows not which way to deal withal, and of this sort is that which possesses your daughter ; if what we shall administer might be sufficient, your Majesty should be happy in your desires, and mine also ; but if things prove otherwise, and your Majesty be not satisfied with my endeavours, I shall submit, and your Majesty may deal with me as I deserve. In the mean time, I desire your Majesty would give order a theatre be erected in the churchyard of Notre Dame, big enough to receive all the nobility and clergy in the town : let this theatre, if your Majesty think good, be hung with cloth of gold and other rich stuffs, and an altar set up in the middle ; on Sunday next, I would desire your Majesty to be there, with all the princes and nobility in Paris, and after a grand Mass is sung, let the princess be brought also. Besides this it is necessary there should be twenty persons at least, with trumpets, horns, drums, hautboys, and cymbals, ready in some by-place, when I throw up my cap into the air, to advance towards the theatre with all the noise they can make ; which music, with some other ingredients

that I have, will, I hope, send the devil packing from the princess.

The King gave order all things should be done as Matteo requested, and Sunday being come, and the theatre thronged with a multitude of persons of quality, and the churchyard of Notre-Dame full of people, the princess was led in by two bishops, and followed by several lords of the court. Roderic was in a terrible amaze to behold so magnificent a preparation, and, pondering with himself, was overheard to pronounce these words :

I would fain know what this rascally peasant means to do ! I have seen many places ; I have more than once seen the whole pomp of Heaven, nor am I ignorant of what is most formidable in Hell, yet can I not tell what to make of this ; but I'll handle him like a rogue as he is, and if I fail, Pluto requite me !

Matteo came up close to him, and desired him very civilly to depart ; but Roderic cried out :

Oh the wondrous cunning that is in you ! Do you think by this whimsy to save yourself from my power, and the indignation of the King ? But think what you will, you scoundrel, I am resolved you shall hang for it, or else let me pass for the most miserable poor-spirited devil in the world !

Matteo persisted in his request, but Belphegor

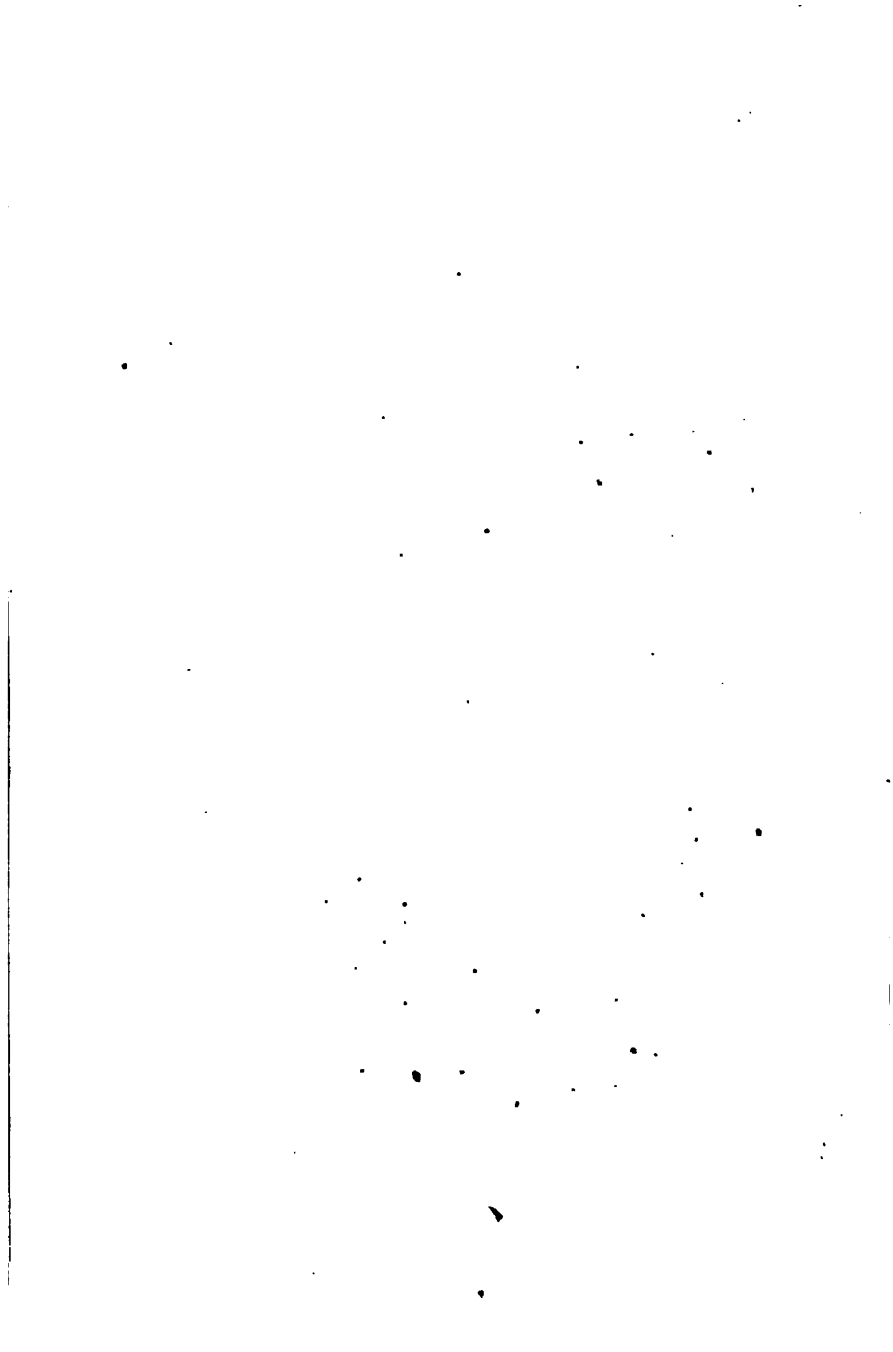
gave him worse language than before ; but all that frightened not Matteo, for without losing more time he threw his hat up into the air, and at an instant the trumpets, horns, and all the rest of the music struck up, and advanced towards the theatre. Roderic was startled at the noise, and made it manifest that there are some devils as fearful as men, and, not able to imagine the reason, he called out to Matteo, and asked what was the matter. Matteo, being a cunning rogue every inch of him, as if he had been terribly frightened, informs him thus :

Alas, poor Roderic ! says he, 'tis your wife Honesta is come to seek you at Paris !

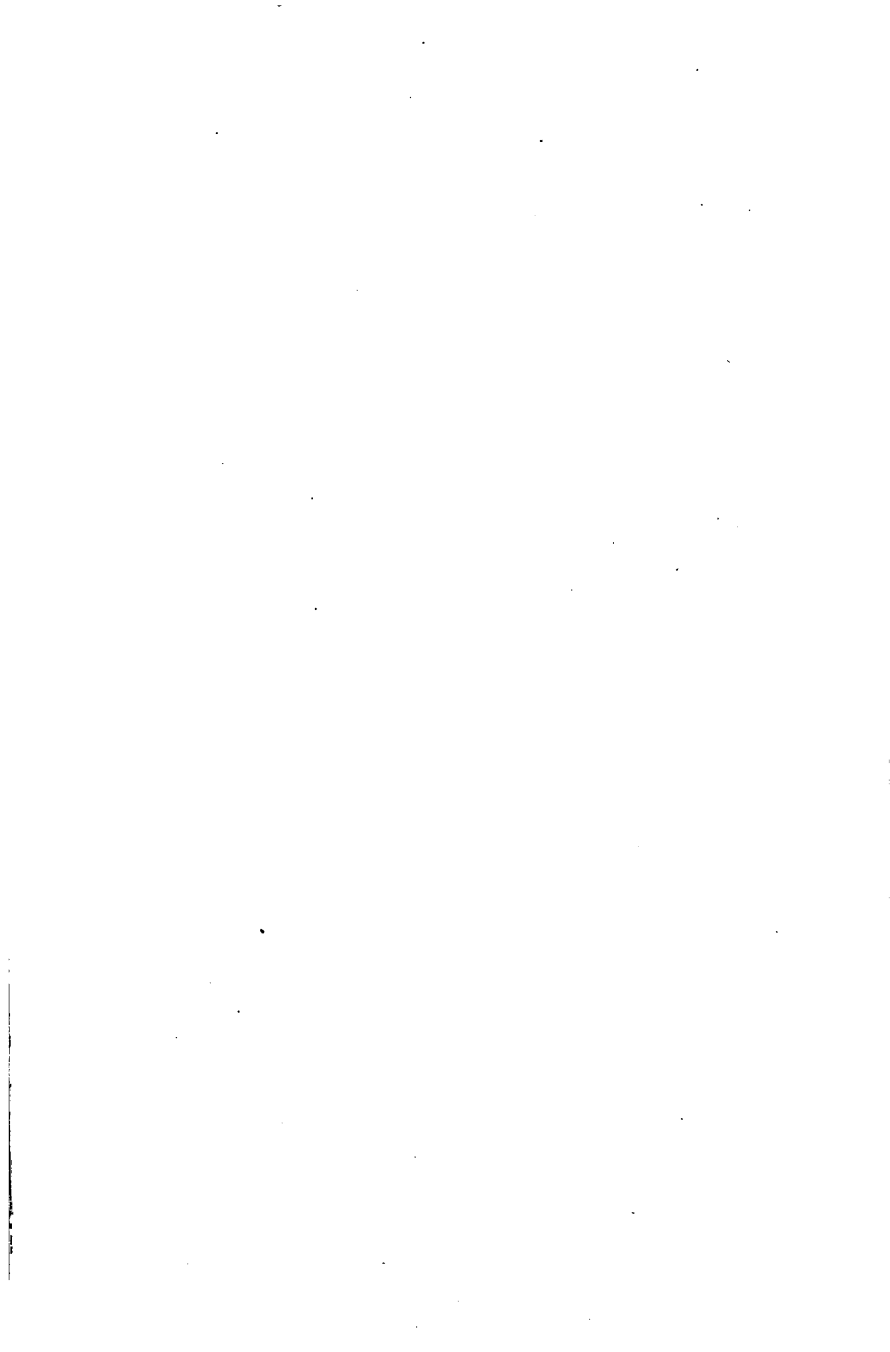
He said no more, but it is not to be imagined what disorder these four or five words put the devil into ; they took away his wit and judgment, so as, without any consideration whether the news was possible or not, without speaking one word, away he stole from the princess ; choosing rather to go back into hell, and give up his accounts there, than to return again into the thralldom of matrimony, that had already cost him so many sorrows and dangers. As soon as he arrived, he demanded audience ; and in the presence of Pluto, Æacus, Minos, and Rhadamanthus, all of them councillors of state, he declared that the souls of men were in

the right on it, and that 'twas their wives that sent them to hell.

Matteo, that had been too crafty for the devil, returns to Florence in great triumph; the chronicle mentions not any great matter the King gave him, but it says that, having gained sufficiently by the two former, he esteemed himself very happy that he had escaped hanging at Paris.







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